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THE EXECUTION OF JANE

THE TOWER OF LONDON

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE

BY

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

Author of "Jack Sheppard," "Guy Fawkes," "Windsor Castle," etc.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

MARY, THE QUEEN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

NEW YORK

THE CENTURY CO.

1909

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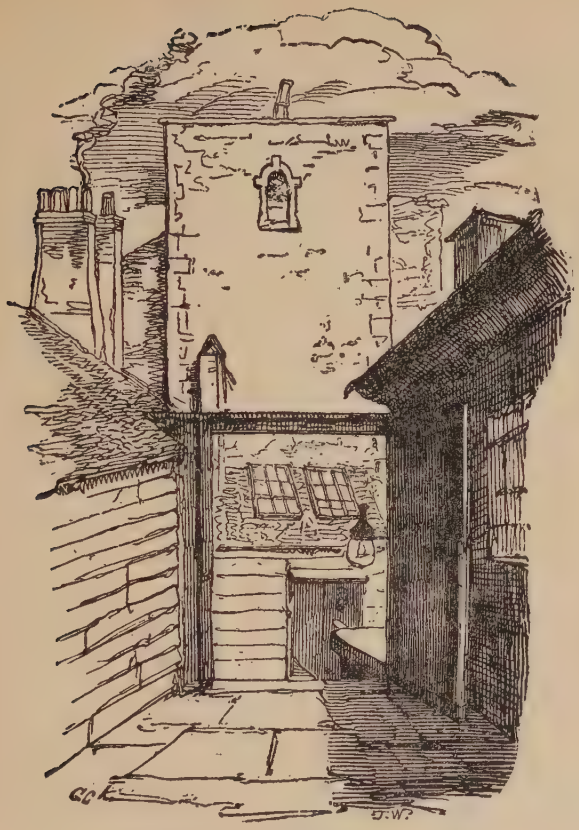


NORTH VIEW OF THE SALT TOWER.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW MAGOG NEARLY LOST HIS SUPPER; HOW HIS BEARD WAS BURNT; HOW XIT WAS PLACED IN A BASKET; AND HOW HE WAS KICKED UPON THE RAMPARTS.

Congratulations, rejoicings, and public thanksgivings followed the Queen's preservation from the hand of the assassin. Courtenay, who had long planned a masque to

be exhibited for her amusement within the Tower, thought this a fitting occasion to produce it. And the utmost expedition being used, on the day but one after Underhill's attempt, all was in readiness.

Great mystery having been observed in the preparations for the pageant, that it might come upon the spectators as a surprise, none, except those actually concerned in it, knew what was intended to be represented. Even the actors themselves were kept in darkness concerning it, and it was only on the night before, when their dresses were given them, that they had any precise notion of the characters they were to assume. A sort of rehearsal then took place in one of the lower chambers of the palace, at which the Earl of Devonshire assisted in person, and instructed them in their parts. A few trials soon made all perfect, and when the rehearsal was over, Courtenay felt satisfied that the pageant would go off with tolerable *éclat*.

As may be supposed, the three gigantic warders and their diminutive follower were among the mummers. Indeed, the principal parts were assigned them; and on no previous occasion had Xit's characteristic coxcombry been more strongly called forth than during the rehearsal. No consequential actor of modern times could give himself more airs. Perceiving he was indispensable, he would only do exactly what pleased him, and, when reprimanded for his impertinence, refused to perform at all, and was about to walk off with an air of offended dignity. A few conciliatory words, however, from the Earl of Devonshire induced him to return; and when all was arranged to his satisfaction, he began to exhibit a fun and humor that bid fair to outshine all his competitors.

The rehearsal over, a substantial repast was provided by the Earl for his troop. And here, as usual, the giants accquitted themselves to admiration. Unfortunately, however, for Magog, his spouse was present, and his dull apprehension of his part at the rehearsal having excited her displeasure, she now visited it upon his devoted head. Whenever he helped himself to a piece of meat, or a

capon, she snatched it from his plate, and transferred it to those of his brethren.

Supper was nearly over, and the hen-pecked giant, who as yet had tasted nothing, was casting wistful glances at the fast-vanishing dishes, when Dame Placida arose, and saying she was greatly fatigued, expressed her determination to return home immediately. In vain Magog remonstrated. She was firm, and her hapless spouse was arising with a most rueful countenance to accompany her, when Ribald very obligingly offered to take his place and escort her. Dame Placida appeared nothing loath, and Magog, having eagerly embraced the proposal, the pair departed.

"And now, brother," said Gog, "you can do as you please. Make up for lost time."

"Doubt it not," replied Magog, "and by way of commencing, I will trouble you for that sirloin of beef. Send me the dish and the carving-knife, I pray you, for with this puny bit of steel I can make no progress at all."

His request was immediately complied with, and it was pleasant to behold with what inconceivable rapidity slice after slice disappeared. In a brief space, a few bare bones were all that remained of the once lordly joint. Magog's brethren watched his progress with truly fraternal interest. Their own appetites being satisfied, they had full leisure to minister to his wants, and most sedulously did they attend to them. A brisket of veal, steeped in verjuice, supplied the place of the sirloin, and a hare-pie, in due season, that of the veal.

Magog acknowledged these attentions with grateful murmurings. He was too busy to speak. When the hare-pie, which was of a somewhat savory character, was entirely consumed, he paused for a moment, and pointed significantly to a large measure of wine at some little distance from him.

Og immediately stretched out his arm, and handed it to him. Nodding to his brother, the married giant drained its contents at a draught, and then applied himself with

new ardor to the various dishes with which his plate was successively laden.

"What would your wife say, if she could see you now?" observed Peter Trusbut, who sat opposite to him, and witnessed his proceedings with singular satisfaction.

"Don't mention her," rejoined Magog, bolting a couple of cheesecakes which he had crammed at the same time into his capacious mouth; "don't mention her, or you will take away my appetite."

"No fear of that," laughed the pantler; "but what say you to a glass of distilled waters? It will be a good windup to your meal, and aid digestion."

"With all my heart," rejoined the giant.

The pantler then handed him a stone bottle, holding perhaps a quart, and knowing his propensities, thought it needful to caution him as to the strength of the liquid. Disregarding the hint, Magog emptied the greater part of the spirit into a flagon, and tossed it off as if it had been water. Peter Trusbut held up his hands in amazement, and expected to see the giant drop senseless under the table. But no such event followed. The only consequence of the potent draught being that it brought the water into his eyes, and made him gasp a little to recover his breath.

"How do you feel after it, brother?" inquired Og, slapping him on the shoulder.

"So valiant," hiccuped Magog, "that I think, when I get home I shall assert my proper position as a lord of the creation."

"Act up to that resolution, Master Magog," observed the pantler, laughing, "and I shall not think my liquor thrown away."

"If such be its effect," said Xit, who, it has before been remarked, had an unconquerable tendency to imitate, and, if possible, exceed the extravagances of his companions, "I will e'en try a drop of it myself."

And before he could be prevented, the mannikin applied

the stone bottle to his lips, and drained it to the last drop. If Magog's brain was sufficiently stolid to resist the effect of the fiery liquid, Xit's was not. Intoxication speedily displayed itself in the additional brilliancy of his keen sparkling little orbs, and in all his gestures. At first, his antics created much diversion, and he was allowed to indulge them freely; but before long he became so outrageous and mischievous, that it was found necessary to restrain him. Springing upon the table, he cut the most extraordinary capers among the dishes, breaking several of them, upsetting the flagons and pots of wine, tweaking the noses of the male guests, kissing the females, and committing a hundred other monkey tricks.

On being called to order, he snapped his fingers in the face of the reprover, and conceiving himself especially affronted by Gog, he threw a goblet at his head. Luckily the missile was caught before it reached its mark. He next seized a torch, and perceiving that Magog had fallen asleep, set fire to his beard, to arouse him. Starting to his feet, the giant clapped his hand to his chin—too late however, to save a particle of his hirsute honors. His rage was terrific. Roaring like a wild bull, he vowed he would be the death of the offender; and would have kept his word, if it had not been for his brethren, who, seizing each an arm, restrained him by main strength, and forced him into his seat, where, after a few minutes, his anger gave way to laughter.

This was mainly attributable to an accident that befel Xit in his hurry to escape. Not being particular where he set his feet, the dwarf plumped into an open plum tart, the syrup of which was so thick and glutinous that it detained him as effectually as birdlime. In his terror, he dragged the dish after him to a considerable distance, and his grimaces were so irresistibly ludicrous that they convulsed the beholders with laughter. No one attempted to assist him, and it was only by the loss of both shoes that he could extricate himself from his unpleasant situation. Peter Trusbut then seized him, and thrusting

him into a basket, fastened down the lid to prevent further mischief.

This occurrence served as the signal for separation. Og and Gog took their way to the By-ward Tower, the latter carrying the basket containing Xit under his arm, while Magog, bemoaning the loss of his beard, and afraid of presenting himself to his wife under such untoward circumstances, accompanied them as far as the gateway of the Bloody Tower. Here he paused to say good night.

"Would I could anticipate a good night, myself!" he groaned. "But I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep in comfort now. Ah! brothers, if I had but listened to your advice! But repentance comes too late."

"It does—it does," replied Gog: "but let us hope your dame will amend."

"That she never will," screamed Xit from the basket. "What a lucky escape *I* had—ha! ha!"

"Peace! thou stinging gadfly," roared Magog. "Am I ever to be tormented by thee!"

But as Xit, who imagined himself secure, only laughed the louder, he grew at last so enraged, that snatching the basket from Og, he placed it on the ground, and gave it such a kick, that it flew to the top of the ramparts beyond Traitor's Tower, where it was picked up by a sentinel, and the dwarf taken out more dead than alive.

On reaching his habitation, which was the same Dame Placida had formerly occupied during her state of widowhood, at the right of the road leading from the Bloody Tower to the Green, Magog found she had not retired to rest as he expected, but was engaged in conversation with Ribald, who had been prevailed upon to remain for a few minutes to taste the ale for which she was so much and so justly celebrated. One cup had led to another, and the jovial warder seemed in no hurry to depart. The giant was delighted to see him, and forgetting his misfortune, was about to shake him heartily by the hand, when his wife screamed out: "Why, Magog, what is the matter with your chin? You have lost your beard!"

Humbly deprecating her resentment, the giant endeavored to explain. But as nothing would satisfy her, he was fain to leave her with Ribald, and betake himself to his couch, where he speedily fell asleep, and forgot his troubles.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE MASQUE GIVEN BY COURTENAY IN HONOR OF QUEEN MARY; AND HOW XIT WAS SWALLOWED BY A SEA-MONSTER.

During the early part of the next day, the majority of the inmates of the Tower were on the tiptoe of expectation for the coming pageant, which was fixed to take place in the evening in the large court lying eastward of that wing of the palace, denominated the Queen's Lodgings. The great hall, used on the previous night for the rehearsal, was allotted as a dressing-room to those engaged in the performance, and thither they repaired a few hours before the entertainment commenced.

As the day declined, multitudes flocked to the court, and stationed themselves within the barriers, which had been erected to keep off the crowd. In addition to these defences, a warder was stationed at every ten paces, and a large band of halberdiers was likewise in attendance to maintain order. Banners were suspended from the battlements of the four towers flanking the corners of the court—namely, the Salt Tower, the Lanthorn Tower, the Wardrobe Tower, and the Broad Arrow Tower. The summits of these fortifications were covered with spectators, as were the eastern ramparts and the White Tower. Such windows of the palace as overlooked the scene were likewise thronged.

At the southern extremity of the court, stretching from the Lanthorn Tower to the Salt Tower, stood a terrace, raised a few feet above the level of the enclosure, and

protected by a low-arched balustrade of stone. This was set apart for the Queen, and beneath a mulberry-tree, amid the branches of which a canopy of crimson velvet was disposed, her chair was placed.

About six o'clock, when every inch of standing-room was occupied, and expectation raised to its highest pitch, a door in the palace leading to the terrace was thrown open, and the Queen issued from it. Stunning vociferations welcomed her, and these were followed, or rather accompanied, by a prolonged flourish of trumpets. It was a moment of great excitement, and many a heart beat high at the joyous sounds. Every eye was directed towards Mary, who bowing repeatedly in acknowledgment of her enthusiastic reception, was saluted with "God save your Highness! Confusion to your enemies! Death to all traitors!" and other exclamations referring to her late providential deliverance.

The Queen was attired in a rich gown of raised cloth of gold. A partlet, decorated with precious stones, surrounded her throat, and her stomacher literally blazed with diamonds. Upon her head she wore a caul of gold, and over it, at the back, a round cap, embroidered with orient pearls. In front, she wore a cornet of black velvet, likewise embroidered with pearls. A couple of beautiful Italian greyhounds, confined by a silken leash, accompanied her. She was in excellent spirits, and, whether excited by the promised spectacle, or by some secret cause, appeared unusually animated. Many of the beholders, dazzled by her gorgeous attire, and struck by her sprightly air, thought her positively beautiful. Smilingly acknowledging the greetings of her subjects, she gave her hand to the Earl of Devonshire, and was conducted by him to the seat beneath the mulberry-tree.

They were followed by a numerous train of dames and nobles, foremost among whom came Sir Henry Bedingfeld, who as Lieutenant of the Tower, claimed the right of standing behind the royal chair. Next to the knight stood the Princess Elizabeth, who viewed with the bit-

terest jealousy the devoted attention paid by Courtenay to her sister; and next to the Princess stood Jane the Fool. Simon Renard also was among the crowd. But he kept aloof, resolved not to show himself unless occasion required it.

As soon as the Queen was seated, another flourish of trumpets was blown, and from the great gates at the farther end of the court issued a crowd of persons clothed in the skins of wild animals, dragging an immense machine, painted to resemble a rocky island. On reaching the centre of the enclosure, the topmost rock burst open, and discovered a beautiful female seated upon a throne, with a crown on her head, and a sceptre in her hand. While the spectators expressed their admiration of her beauty by loud plaudits, another rock opened, and discovered a fiendish-looking figure, armed with a strangely-formed musket, which he levelled at the mimic sovereign. A cry of horror pervaded the assemblage, but at that moment another rock burst asunder, and a fairy arose, who placed a silver shield between the queen and the assassin, while a gauze drapery, wafted from beneath enveloped them in its folds.

At the appearance of the fairy, the musket fell from the assassin's grasp. Uttering a loud cry, a troop of demons issued from below, and seizing him with their talons bore him out of sight. The benignant fairy then waved her sword; the gauzy drapery dropped to her feet; and four other female figures arose, representing Peace, Plenty, Justice, and Clemency. These figures ranged themselves round the Queen, and the fairy addressed her in a speech, telling her that these were her attributes;—that she had already won her people's hearts, and ended by promising her a long and prosperous reign. Each word that applied to Mary was followed by a cheer from the bystanders, and when it was ended, the applauses were deafening. The mimic queen then arose, and taking off her crown, tendered it to the real sovereign. The four attributes likewise extended their arms

towards her, and told her they belonged to her. And while the group was in this position, the machine was borne away.

Fresh flourishes of trumpets succeeded, and several lively airs were played by bands of minstrels stationed at different points of the court-yard.

A wild and tumultuous din was now heard, and the gates being again thrown open, forth rushed a legion of the most grotesque and fantastic figures ever beheld Some were habited as huge, open-jawed sea-monsters; others as dragons, gorgons, and hydras; others as satyrs and harpies; others as gnomes and salamanders. Some large hideous masks, making them look all head, some had monstrous wings, some long coiled tails, like serpents: many were mounted on hobby-horses, and all whose garbs would permit them were armed with staves, flails, or other indescribable weapons.

When this multitudinous and confused assemblage had nearly filled the enclosure, loud roarings were heard, and from the gateway marched Gog and Magog, arrayed like their gigantic namesakes of Guildhall. A long artificial beard, of a blue tint, supplied the loss which Magog's singed chin had sustained. His head was bound with a wreath of laurel leaves. Gog's helmet precisely resembled that worn by his namesake, and he carried a curiously-formed shield, charged with the device of a black eagle, like that with which the wooden statue is furnished. Magog was armed with a long staff, to which a pudding-net, stuffed with wool, was attached, while Gog bore a long lathen spear. The appearance of the giants was hailed with a general roar of delight. But the laughter and applauses were increased by what followed.

Once more opened to their widest extent, the great gates admitted what at first appeared to be a moving fortification. From its sides projected two enormous arms, each sustaining a formidable club. At the summit stood a smaller turret, within which, encircled by a wreath of roses and other flowers, decorated with silken

pennoncels, sat Xit, his pigmy person clothed in tight silk fleshings. Glittering wings fluttered on his shoulders, and he was armed with the weapons of the Paphian god. The tower, which, with its decorations, was more than twenty feet high, was composed of basket work, covered with canvas, painted to resemble a round embattled structure. It was tenanted by Og, who moved about in it with the greatest ease. A loophole in front enabled him to see what was going forward, and he marched slowly towards the centre of the enclosure. An edging of loose canvas, painted like a rocky foundation, concealed his feet. The effect of this moving fortress was highly diverting, and elicited shouts of laughter and applause from the beholders.

"That device," observed Courtenay to the Queen, "represents a tower of strength—or rather, I should say, the Tower of London. It is about to be attacked by the rabble rout of rebellion, and, I trust, will be able to make good its defence against them."

"I hope so," replied Mary, smiling. "I should be grieved to think that my good Tower yielded to such assailants. But who is that I perceive? Surely it is Cupid?"

"Love is at present an inhabitant of the Tower," replied Courtenay, with a passionate look.

Raising his eyes, the next moment he perceived Elizabeth behind Sir Henry Bedingfeld. She turned from him with a look of reproach.

A seasonable interruption to his thoughts was offered by the tumultuous cry arising from the mummers. Gog and Magog having placed themselves on either side of the Tower as its defenders, the assault commenced. The object of the assailants was to overthrow the fortress. With this view, they advanced against it from all quarters, thrusting one another forward, and hurling their weapons against it. This furious attack was repelled by the two giants, who drove them back as fast as they advanced, hurling some head over heels, trampling others under

foot, and exhibiting extraordinary feats of strength and activity. The Tower itself was not behind-hand in resistance. Its two arms moved about like the sails of a windmill, dealing tremendous blows.

The conflict afforded the greatest amusement to the beholders; but while the fortress and its defenders maintained their ground against all the assailants, there was one person who began to find his position somewhat uncomfortable. This was Xit. So long as Og contented himself with keeping off his enemies, the dwarf was delighted with his elevated situation, and looked round with a smile of delight. But when the giant, animated by the sport, began to attack in his turn, the fabric in which he was encased swayed to and fro so violently, that Xit expected every moment to be precipitated to the ground. In vain he attempted to communicate his fears to Og. The giant was unconscious of his danger, and the din and confusion around them was so great, that neither Gog nor Magog could hear his outcries. As a last resource he tried to creep into the turret, but this he found impracticable.

"The god of love appears in a perilous position, my lord," observed the Queen, joining in the laughter of the spectators.

"He does, indeed," replied Courtenay: "and though the Tower may defend itself, I fear its chief treasure will be lost in the struggle."

"You speak the truth, my lord," remarked the deep voice of Simon Renard from behind.

If Courtenay intended any reply to this observation of his mortal foe, it was prevented by an incident which at that moment occurred. Combining their forces, the rabble rout of dragons, gorgons, imps, and demons had made a desperate assault upon the Tower. Og whirled around his clubs with increased rapidity, and dozens were prostrated by their sweep. Gog and Magog likewise plied their weapons vigorously, and the assailants were driven back completely discomfited.

But, unluckily, at this moment, Og made a rush for-

ward to complete his conquest, and in so doing pitched Xit out of the turret. Falling head foremost into the yawning jaws of an enormous goggle-eyed sea-monster, whose mouth seemed purposely opened to receive him, and being moved by springs, immediately closed, the dwarf entirely disappeared. A scream of delight arose from the spectators, who looked upon the occurrence as part of the pageant.

The Queen laughed heartily at Xit's mischance, and even Courtenay, though discomposed by the accident, could not help joining in the universal merriment.

"I might take it as an evil omen," he remarked in an undertone to Mary, "that love should be destroyed by your Majesty's enemies."

"See! he reappears," cried the Queen, calling the Earl's attention to the monster, whose jaws opened and discovered the dwarf. "He has sustained no injury."

Xit's disaster, meanwhile, had occasioned a sudden suspension of hostilities among the combatants. All the mummers set up a shout of laughter, and the echoing of sound produced by their masks was almost unearthly. Gog and Magog, grinning from ear to ear, now approached the dwarf, and offered to restore him to his turret. But he positively refused to stir, and commanded the monster in whose jaws he was seated, to carry him to the Queen. After a little parley, the order was obeyed; and the huge pasteboard monster, which was guided withinside by a couple of men, wheeled round, and dragged its scaly length towards the terrace.

Arrived opposite the royal seat, the mimic Cupid sprang out of the monster's jaws, and fluttering his gauzy wings (which were a little the worse for his recent descent) to give himself the appearance of flying, ran nimbly up the side of the terrace, and vaulted upon the balustrade in front of her Majesty. He had still possession of his bow and arrows, and poising himself with considerable grace on the point of his left foot, fitted a silver shaft to the string, and aimed it at the Queen.

"Your Highness is again threatened," observed Sir Henry Bedingfeld, advancing and receiving the arrow, which, winged with but little force, dropped harmlessly from his robe.

"You are ever faithful, Sir Henry," observed Mary to the knight, whose zeal in this instance occasioned a smile among the attendants; "but we have little fear from the darts of Cupid."

Xit, meanwhile, had fitted another arrow, and drawing it with greater force, struck Courtenay on the breast. Not content with this, the mischievous urchin let fly a third shaft at the Princess Elizabeth, who had advanced somewhat nearer the Queen, and the arrow chancing to stick to some of the ornaments on her stomacher, appeared to have actually pierced her bosom. Elizabeth colored deeply as she plucked the dart from her side, and threw it angrily to the ground. A cloud gathered on the Queen's brow, and Courtenay was visibly disconcerted.

Xit, however, either unconscious of the trouble he had occasioned, or utterly heedless of it, took a fourth arrow from his quiver, and affecting to sharpen its point upon the stone balustrade, shot it against Jane the Fool. This last shaft likewise hit its mark, though Jane endeavored to ward it off with her marotte; and Xit completed the absurdity of the scene by fluttering towards her, and seizing her hand, pressed it to his lips—a piece of gallantry for which he was rewarded by a sound cuff on the ears.

"Nay, mistress," cried Xit, "that is scarcely fair. Love and Folly were well matched."

"If Love mate with Folly, he must expect to be thus treated," replied Jane.

"Nay, then, I will bestow my favors on the wisest woman I can find," replied Xit.

"There thou wilt fail again," cried Jane; "for every wise woman will shun thee."

"A truce to thy rejoinders, sweetheart," returned Xit. "Thy wit is as keen as my arrows, and as sure to hit the mark."

"My wit resembles thy godship's arrows in one particular only," retorted Jane. "It strikes deepest where it is most carelessly aimed. But, hie away! Thou wilt find Love no match for Folly."

"So I perceive," replied Xit, "and shall therefore proceed to Beauty. I must have been blinder than poets feign, to have come near thee at all. In my pursuit of Folly, I have forgot the real business of Love. But thus it is ever with me and my minions!"

With this, he fluttered towards the Queen, and prostrating himself before her said, "Your Majesty will not banish Love from your court?"

"Assuredly not," replied Mary; "or if we did banish thee, thou wouldst be sure to find some secret entrance."

"Your Majesty is in the right," replied the mimic deity. "I should. And disdain not this caution from Cupid. As long as you keep my two companions, Jealousy and Malice, at a distance, Love will appear in his own rosy hues. But the moment you admit them, he will change his colors and become a tormentor."

"But if thou distributest thy shafts at random, so that lovers dote on more than one object, how am I to exclude Jealousy?" asked the Queen.

"By cultivating self-esteem," replied Cupid. "The heart I have wounded for your Highness can never feel disloyalty."

"That is true, thou imp," observed Courtenay; "and for that speech I forgive thee the mischief thou hast done."

"And so thou assurest me against infidelity?" said Mary.

"Your Highness may be as inconstant as you please," replied Cupid, "since the dart I aimed at you has been turned aside by Sir Henry Bedingfeld. But rest easy. He who loves you can love no other."

"I am well satisfied," replied Mary with a gratified look. "And since I have thy permission to love whom I

please, I shall avail myself largely of it, and give all my heart to my subjects."

"Not *all* your heart, my gracious mistress," said Courtenay in a tender whisper.

At this juncture, Xit, watching his opportunity, drew an arrow from his quiver, and touched the Queen with it near the heart.

"I have hit your Majesty at last, as well as the Earl of Devonshire," he cried gleefully. "Shall I summon my brother Hymen to your assistance? He is among the crowd below."

A half-suppressed smile among the royal attendants followed this daring remark.

"That knave's audacity encourages me to hope, gracious madam," whispered Courtenay, "that this moment may be the proudest—the happiest of my life."

"No more of this—at least not now, my lord," replied Mary, whose notions of decorum were somewhat scandalized at this public declaration. "Dismiss this imp. He draws too many eyes upon us."

"I have a set of verses to recite to your Majesty," interposed Xit, whose quick ears caught the remark, and who was in no hurry to leave the royal presence.

"Not now," rejoined Mary, rising. "Fear nothing, thou merry urchin. We will take care Love meets its desert. We thank you, my lord," she added, turning to Courtenay, "for the pleasant pastime you have afforded us."

As the Queen arose, loud and reiterated shouts resounded from the spectators, in which all the mummers joined. Amid these acclamations she returned to the palace. Courtenay again tendered her his hand, and the slight pressure which he hazarded was sensibly returned.

Just as she was about to enter the window, Mary turned round to bow for the last time to the assemblage, when there arose a universal cry: "Long live Queen Mary!—Long live the Earl of Devonshire!"

Mary smiled. Her bosom palpitated with pleasure, and she observed to her lover, "You are the people's fav

orite, my lord. I should not deserve to be their Queen if I did not share in their affection."

"May I then hope?" asked the Earl eagerly.

"You may," replied Mary softly.

The brilliant vision which these words raised before Courtenay's eyes was dispersed by a look which he at that moment received from Elizabeth.

The festivities in the court did not terminate with the departure of the Royal train. Xit was replaced in the turret, whence he aimed his darts at the prettiest damsels he could perceive, creating infinite merriment among the crowd. An immense ring was then formed by all the mummers, who danced round the three giants, the minstrels accompanying the measure with appropriate strains. Nothing more grotesque can be imagined than the figures of Gog and Magog, as engaged in the dance, in their uncouth garbs. As to Og, he flourished his clubs, and twirled himself round with great rapidity in the opposite direction to the round of dancers, until at last, becoming giddy, he lost his balance, and fell with a tremendous crash, upsetting Xit for the second time.

Ever destined to accidents, the dwarf, from his diminutive stature, seldom sustained any injury, and upon this occasion, though a good deal terrified, he escaped unhurt Og was speedily uncased, and glad to be set at liberty joined the ring of dancers, and footed it with as much glee as the merriest of them.

As the evening advanced fireworks were discharged, and a daring rope-dancer, called Peter the Dutchman, ascended the cupola of the south-east turret of the White Tower, and got upon the vane, where he lighted a couple of torches. After standing for some time, now upon one foot—now on the other, he kindled a firework placed in a sort of helmet on his head, and descended amid a shower of sparks by a rope, one end of which was fastened in the court where the masquers were assembled. A substantial supper, of which the mummers and their friends partook, concluded the diversions of the evening, and all departed well satisfied with their entertainment.

CHAPTER XV.

BY WHOSE INSTRUMENTALITY QUEEN MARY BECAME CONVINCED OF COURTENAY'S INCONSTANCY; AND HOW SHE AFFIANCED HERSELF TO PHILIP OF SPAIN.

While the festivities above described occurred without the palace, within all was confusion and alarm. The look which Elizabeth had given Courtenay sank into his very soul. All his future greatness appeared valueless in his eyes, and his only desire was to break off the alliance with Mary, and reinstate himself in the affections of her sister. For the Queen, it is almost needless to say, he felt no real love. But he was passionately enamored of Elizabeth, whose charms had completely captivated him.

As soon as she could consistently do so, after her return to the palace, the Princess retired to her own apartments, and though her departure afforded some relief to the Earl, he still continued in a state of great perturbation. Noticing his altered manner, the Queen inquired the cause with great solicitude. Courtenay answered her evasively. And putting her own construction upon it, she said in a tone of encouragement, "It was a strange remark made by the little urchin who enacted Cupid. Was he tutored in his speech?"

"Not by me, gracious madam," replied Courtenay distractedly.

"Then the knave hath a ready wit," returned the Queen. "He has put thoughts into my head which I cannot banish thence."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Earl. "I trust his boldness has not offended you."

"Do I look so?" rejoined Mary, smiling. "If I do, my countenance belies my feelings. No, Courtenay, I

have been thinking that no woman can govern a great kingdom like mine unaided. She must have some one to whom she can ever apply for guidance and protection, some one to whom she can open her whole heart, to whom she can look for counsel, consolation, love. In whom could she find all this?"

"In no one but a husband, gracious madam," replied Courtenay, who felt he could no longer affect to misunderstand her.

"You are right, my lord," she replied playfully. "Can you not assist our choice?"

"If I dared"—said Courtenay, who felt he was standing upon the verge of a precipice.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Mary. "A Queen must ever play the wooer. It is part of her prerogative. Our choice is already made—so we need not consult you on the subject."

"May I not ask whom your Majesty has so far distinguished?" demanded the Earl, trembling.

"You shall learn anon, my lord," replied the Queen. "We choose to keep you a short time in suspense, for here comes Simon Renard, and we do not intend to admit him to our confidence."

"That man is ever in my path," muttered the Earl, returning the Ambassador's stern glance with one equally menacing. "I am half reconciled to this hateful alliance by the thought of the mortification it will inflict upon him."

It would almost seem from Renard's looks, that he could read what was passing in the other's breast; for his brow grew each instant more lowering.

"I must quit your Majesty for a moment," observed Courtenay, "to see to the masquers. Besides, my presence might be a restraint to your councillor. He shall not want an opportunity to utter his calumnies behind my back."

Renard smiled bitterly.

"Farewell, my lord," said the Queen, giving him her

hand to kiss. "When you return you shall have your answer."

"It is the last time his lips shall touch that hand," muttered Renard, as the Earl departed.

On quitting the royal presence, Courtenay wandered in a state of the utmost disquietude to the terrace. He gazed vacantly at the masquers, and tried to divert his thoughts with their sports; but in vain. He could not free himself from the idea of Elizabeth. He had now reached the utmost height of his ambition. He was all but affianced to the Queen, and he doubted not that a few hours—perhaps moments—would decide his fate. His bosom was torn with conflicting emotions. On one side stood power, with all its temptations—on the other passion, fierce, irrepressible passion. The struggle was almost intolerable.

After debating with himself for some time, he determined to seek one last interview with Elizabeth before he finally committed himself to the Queen, vainly imagining it would calm his agitation. But, like most men under the influence of desperate emotion, he acted from impulse rather than reflection. The resolution was no sooner formed than acted upon. Learning that the Princess was in her chamber, he proceeded thither, and found her alone.

Elizabeth was seated in a small room partially hung with arras, and over the chair she occupied were placed the portraits of her sire, Henry the Eighth, and two of his wives, Anne Boleyn and Catherine of Aragon. Greatly surprised by the Earl's visit, she immediately arose, and in an authoritative tone commanded him to withdraw.

"How is this?" she cried. "Are you not content with what you have already done, but must add insult to perfidy?"

"Hear me, Elizabeth," said Courtenay, advancing towards her, and throwing himself on his knee. "I am come to implore your forgiveness."

"You have my compassion my lord," rejoined Elizabeth;

"but you shall not have my forgiveness. You have deeply deceived me."

"I have deceived myself," replied Courtenay.

"A paltry prevarication, and unworthy of you," observed the Princess scornfully. "But I have endured this long enough. Arise, and leave me."

"I will *not* leave you, Elizabeth," said Courtenay, "till I have explained the real motives of my conduct, and the real state of my feelings, which, when I have done, I am persuaded you will not judge me as harshly as you do now."

"I do not desire to hear them," replied the Princess. "But since you are determined to speak, be brief."

"During my captivity in this fortress," began Courtenay, "when I scarcely hoped for release, and when I was an utter stranger, except from description, to the beauties of your sex, I had certain vague and visionary notions of female loveliness, which I have never since found realized except in yourself."

Elizabeth uttered an exclamation of impatience.

"Do not interrupt me," proceeded Courtenay. "All I wish to show is, that long before I had seen you, my heart was predisposed to love you. On my release from imprisonment, it was made evident in many ways that the Queen, your sister, regarded me with favorable eyes. Dazzled by the distinction—as who would not be?—I fancied I returned her passion. But I knew not then what love was—nor was it till I was bound in this thraldom that I became acquainted with its pangs."

"This you have said before, my lord," rejoined Elizabeth, struggling against her emotion. "And if you had not, it is too late to say it now."

"Your pardon, dearest Elizabeth," rejoined Courtenay, "for such you will ever be to me. I know I do not deserve your forgiveness. But I know, also, that I shall not the less on that account obtain it. Hear the truth from me, and judge me as you think proper. Since I knew that I had gained an interest in your eyes I never

could love your sister. Her throne had no longer any temptation for me—her attachment inspired me with disgust. You were, and still *are*, the sole possessor of my heart."

"Still ARE! my lord," exclaimed Elizabeth indignantly. "And you are about to wed the Queen. Say no more, or my pity for you will be changed into contempt."

"It is my fate," replied the Earl. "Oh! if you knew what the struggle has cost me, to sacrifice love at the shrine of ambition, you would indeed pity me."

"My lord," said Elizabeth proudly, "if you have no respect for me, at least have some for yourself, and cease these unworthy lamentations."

"Tell me you no longer love me—tell me you despise—hate me—anything to reconcile myself to my present lot," cried Courtenay.

"Were I to say I no longer loved you, I should belie my heart," rejoined Elizabeth; "for, unfortunately for my peace of mind I have formed a passion which I cannot conquer. But were I also to say that your abject conduct does not inspire me with contempt—with scorn for you, I should speak falsely. Hear me, in my turn, my lord. To-morrow I shall solicit permission from the Queen to retire from the court altogether, and I shall not return till my feelings towards yourself are wholly changed."

"Say not so," cried Courtenay. "I will forego all the brilliant expectations held out to me by Mary. I cannot endure to part with you."

"You have gone too far to retreat, my lord," said Elizabeth. "You are affianced to my sister."

"Not so," replied Courtenay, "and I never will be. When I came hither, it was to implore your forgiveness, and to take leave of you forever. But I find that wholly impossible. Let us fly from this fortress and find, either in a foreign land or in some obscure corner of this kingdom, a happiness which a crown could not confer."

As he pronounced these words with all the ardor of

genuine passion, he pressed her hand to his lips. Elizabeth did not withdraw it.

"Save me from this great crime," he cried, "save me from wedding one whom I have never loved—save me from a union which my soul abhors."

"Are you sincere?" asked Elizabeth, much moved.

"On my soul I am," replied Courtenay fervently. "Will you fly with me—this night—this hour—now?"

"I will answer that question," cried a voice which struck them both as if a thunderbolt had fallen at their feet. "I will answer that question," cried Mary, forcibly throwing aside the arras and gazing at them with eyes that literally seemed to flash fire—"she will *not*."

"Had I not heard this with my own ears," she continued in a terrible tone, addressing her faithless lover, who still remained in a kneeling posture, regarding her with a look of mingled shame and defiance, "had I not heard this with my own ears, and seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed it! Perfidious villain! you have deceived us both. But you shall feel what it is to incur the resentment of a Queen—and that Queen the daughter of Henry the Eighth. Come in, sir," she added to some one behind the arras, and Simon Renard immediately stepped forth. "As I owe the discovery of the Earl of Devonshire's perfidy to you, the least I can do is to let you witness his disgrace."

"I will not attempt to defend myself, gracious madam," said Courtenay, rising,

"Defend yourself!" echoed the Queen bitterly. "Not a word of your conversation to the Princess has escaped my ears. I was there—behind that curtain—almost as soon as you entered her chamber. I was acquainted with your treachery by this gentleman. I disbelieved him. But I soon found he spoke the truth. A masked staircase enabled me to approach you unobserved. I have heard all—all, traitor, all!"

"To play the eavesdropper was worthy of Simon Renard," returned Courtenay, with a look of deadly

hatred at the Ambassador, "but scarcely, I think, befitting the Queen of England."

"Where the Queen of England has unworthy persons to deal with, she must resort to unworthy means to detect them," returned Mary. "I am deeply indebted to M. Renard for his service—more deeply than I can express. An hour more, and it had been too late. Had I affianced myself to you, I should have considered the engagement binding. As it is, I can unscrupulously break it. I am greatly beholden to you, sir."

"I am truly rejoiced to be the instrument of preventing your Majesty from entering into this degrading alliance," said Renard. "Had it taken place, you would have unceasingly repented it."

"For you, minion," continued the Queen, turning to Elizabeth, who had looked silently on, "I have more pity than anger. You have been equally his dupe."

"I do not desire your Highness's pity," rejoined the Princess haughtily. "Your own case is more deserving of compassion than mine."

"Ah! God's death! derided!" cried the Queen, stamping her foot with indignation. "Summon the guard, M. Renard; I will place them both in confinement. Why am I not obeyed?" she continued, seeing the Ambassador hesitated.

"Do nothing at this moment, I implore you, gracious madam," said Renard in a low voice. "Disgrace were better than imprisonment. You punish the Earl sufficiently in casting him off."

"Obey me, sir," vociferated Mary furiously, "or I will fetch the guard myself. An outraged woman may tamely submit to her wrongs—an outraged Queen can revenge them. Heaven be thanked! I have the power to do so, as I have the will. Down on your knees, Edward Courtenay, whom I have made Earl of Devonshire, and *would* have made King of England—on your knees, I say. Now, my lord, your sword."

"It is here," replied the Earl, presenting it to her,

"and I entreat your Majesty to sheathe it in my bosom."

"His crime does not amount to high treason," whispered Renard, "nor can your Highness do more than disgrace him."

"The guard! the guard, sir!" cried Mary authoritatively. "Our father, Henry the Eighth, whose lineaments frown upon us from that wall, had not authority for all he did. He was an absolute King, and we are absolute Queen. Again I say, the guard! and bid Sir Henry Bedingfeld attend us."

"Your Majesty shall be obeyed," replied Renard, departing.

"Do with me what you please, gracious madam," said Courtenay, as soon as they were alone. "My life is at your disposal. But, I beseech you, do not visit my faults upon the Princess Elizabeth. If your Majesty tracked me hither, you must be well aware that my presence was as displeasing to her as it could be to yourself."

"I will not be sheltered under this plea," replied Elizabeth, whose anger was roused by her sister's imperious conduct. "That the interview was unsought on my part, your Highness well knows. But that I leant a willing ear to the Earl of Devonshire's suit is equally true. And if your Highness rejects him, I see nothing to prevent my accepting him."

"This to my face!" cried Mary in extremity of indignation.

"And wherefore not?" returned Elizabeth maliciously.

"Anger me no further," cried Mary, "or by my father's soul, I will not answer for your head." Her manner was so authoritative, and her looks so terrible, that even Elizabeth was awed.

"Again," interposed Courtenay humbly, "let me, who am the sole cause of your Majesty's most just displeasure, bear the weight of it. The Princess Elizabeth, I repeat, is not to blame."

"I am the best judge in my own cause, my lord," replied the Queen. "I will not hear a word more."

A deep silence then ensued, which was broken by the entrance of the Lieutenant of the Tower and the guard. Renard brought up the rear.

"Sir Henry Bedingfeld," said Mary, "I commit the Princess Elizabeth and the Earl of Devonshire to your custody."

"I can scarcely credit my senses, gracious madam," replied Bedingfeld, gazing at the offenders with much concern, "and would fain persuade myself it is only a part of the pastime I have so recently witnessed."

"It is no pastime, Sir Henry," replied the Queen sternly. "I little thought, when I entrusted you with the government of this fortress, how soon, and how importantly, you would have to exercise your office. Let the prisoners be placed in close confinement."

"This is the first time in my life," replied the old knight, "that I have hesitated to obey your Majesty. And if I do so now, I beseech you to impute it to the right motive."

"How, sir!" cried the Queen fiercely. "Do you desire to make me regret that I have removed Sir John Gage? *He* would not have hesitated."

"For your own sake, gracious madam," said Sir Henry, falling on his knees before her, "I beseech you pause. I have been a faithful servant of your high and renowned father, Henry the Eighth—of your illustrious mother, Catherine of Aragon, who would almost seem—from their pictures on that wall—to be present now. In *their* names, I beseech you pause. I am well aware your feelings have been greatly outraged. But they may prompt you to do that which your calmer judgment may deplore."

"Remonstrance is in vain," rejoined the Queen. "I am inexorable. The Princess Elizabeth may remain a close prisoner in her own apartments. The Earl of Devonshire must be removed elsewhere. You will be answerable for their safe custody."

"I will," replied Bedingfeld, rising; "but I would that I had never lived to see this day!"

With this, he commanded his attendants to remove Courtenay, and when the order was obeyed, he lingered for a moment at the door, in the hope that the Queen would relent. But, as she continued immovable, he departed with a sorrowful heart, and conveyed the Earl to his own lodgings.

Courtenay gone, Elizabeth's proud heart gave way, and she burst into a flood of tears. As Mary saw this, a feeling of compassion crossed her, which Renard perceiving, touched her sleeve, and drew her away.

"It were better to leave her now," he observed. Yielding to his advice, Mary was about to quit the room, when Elizabeth arose and threw herself at her feet.

"Spare him!" she cried.

"She thinks only of her lover," thought the Queen; "those tears are for him. I will *not* pity her."

And she departed without returning an answer.

Having seen two halberdiers placed at the door of the chamber, and two others at the foot of the masked staircase by which she and Renard had approached, Mary proceeded with the Ambassador to her own apartments.

On thinking over the recent occurrences, her feelings were so exasperated that she exclaimed aloud, "Oh that I could avenge myself on the perjured traitor!"

"I will show you how to avenge yourself," replied Renard.

"Do so, then," returned the Queen.

"Unite yourself to my master, Philip of Spain," rejoined the Ambassador. "Your cousin, the Emperor, highly desires the match. It will be an alliance worthy of you, and acceptable to your subjects. The Prince is a member of your own religion, and will enable you to restore its worship throughout your kingdom."

"I will think of it," replied Mary musingly.

"Better *act* upon it," rejoined Renard. "The Prince,

besides his royal birth, is in all respects more richly endowed by nature than the Earl of Devonshire."

"So I have heard him accounted," replied Mary.

"Your Majesty shall judge for yourself," rejoined Renard, producing a miniature. "Here is his portrait. The likeness is by no means flattering."

"He must be very handsome," observed Mary, gazing at the miniature.

"He is," replied Renard; "and his Highness is as eager for the alliance as his imperial father. I have ventured to send him your Majesty's portrait, and you shall hear in what rapturous terms he speaks of it."

And taking several letters from his doublet, he selected one sealed with the royal arms of Spain, from which he read several highly complimentary remarks on Mary's personal appearance.

"Enough, sir," said Mary, checking him. "More unions are formed from pique than from affection, and mine will be one of them. I am resolved to affiance myself to the Prince of Spain, and that forthwith. I will not allow myself time to change my mind."

"Your Highness is in the right," observed Renard eagerly.

"Meet me at midnight in St. John's Chapel in the White Tower," continued the Queen, "where in your presence, and in the presence of Heaven, I will solemnly affiance myself to the Prince."

"Your Majesty transports me by your determination," replied the Ambassador. And full of joy at his unlooked-for success, he took his departure.

At midnight, as appointed, Renard repaired to St. John's Chapel. He found the Queen, attended only by Feckenham, and kneeling before the altar, which blazed with numerous waxlights. She had changed her dress for the ceremony, and was attired in a loose robe of three-piled crimson velvet, trimmed with swansdown. Renard remained at a little distance, and looked on with a smile of Satanic triumph.

After she had received the sacrament, and pronounced the *Veni Creator*, Mary motioned the Ambassador towards her, and placing her right hand on a parchment lying on the altar, to which were attached the broad seals of England, addressed him thus: "I have signed and sealed this instrument, by which I contract and affiance myself in marriage to Philip, Prince of Spain, son of his Imperial Majesty, Charles the Fifth. And I further give you, Simon Renard, representative of the Prince, my irrevocable promise, in the face of the living God and His saints, that I will wed him and no other."

"May Heaven bless the union!" exclaimed Feckenham.

"There is the contract," pursued Mary, giving the parchment to Renard, who reverentially received it. "On my part, it is a marriage concluded."

"And equally so on the part of the Prince, my master," replied Renard. "In his name I beg to express to your Highness the deep satisfaction which this union will afford him."

"For the present this contract must be kept secret, even from our privy councillors," said the Queen.

"It shall never pass my lips," rejoined Renard.

"And mine are closed by my sacred calling," added the confessor.

"Your Majesty, I am sure, has done wisely in this step," observed Renard, "and, I trust, happily."

"I trust so too, sir," replied the Queen; "but time will show. These things are in the hands of the Great Disposer of events."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT BEFEL CICELY IN THE SALT TOWER.

Horror-stricken by the discovery he had made of the body of the ill-fated Alexia, and not doubting from its appearance that she must have perished from starvation, Cholmondeley remained for some time in a state almost of

stupefaction in the narrow chamber where it lay. Rousing himself, at length, he began to reflect that no further aid could be rendered her, that she was now, at last, out of the reach of her merciless tormentor, and that his attention ought, therefore, to be turned towards one who yet lived to suffer from his cruelty.

Before departing he examined the corpse more narrowly to ascertain whether it bore any marks of violence, and while doing so, a gleam of light called his attention to a small antique clasp fastening her tattered hood at the throat. Thinking it not impossible this might hereafter furnish some clue to the discovery of her real name and condition, he removed it. On holding it to the light, he thought he perceived an inscription upon it, but the characters were nearly effaced, and reserving the solution of the mystery for a more favorable opportunity, he carefully secured the clasp, and quitted the cell. He then returned to the passages he had recently traversed, explored every avenue afresh, reopened every cell door, and after expending several hours in fruitless search, was compelled to abandon all hopes of finding Cicely.

Day had long dawned when he emerged from the dungeon, and as he was slowly wending his way towards the Stone Kitchen, he descried Lawrence Nightgall advancing towards him. From the furious gestures of the jailer, he at once knew that he was discovered, and drawing his sword, he stood upon his defence. But a conflict was not what Nightgall desired. He shouted to the sentinels on the ramparts, and informing them that his keys had been stolen, demanded their assistance to secure the robber. Some half-dozen soldiers immediately descended, and Cholmondeley finding resistance in vain, thought fit to surrender. The keys being found upon him, were delivered to Nightgall, while he himself was conveyed to the guard-room near the By-ward Tower.

After he had been detained there for some hours in close captivity—not even being allowed to communicate with his friends in the Stone Kitchen—Nightgall returned

with an order from the Council for his imprisonment in the Nun's Bower, whither he was forthwith removed. On the way to his place of confinement, he encountered Xit, and the friendly dwarf would fain have spoken with him, but he was kept at a distance by the halberts of the guard. He contrived, however, to inform him by sundry nods, winks, and expressive gestures, that he would keep a sharp watch upon the proceedings of Nightgall.

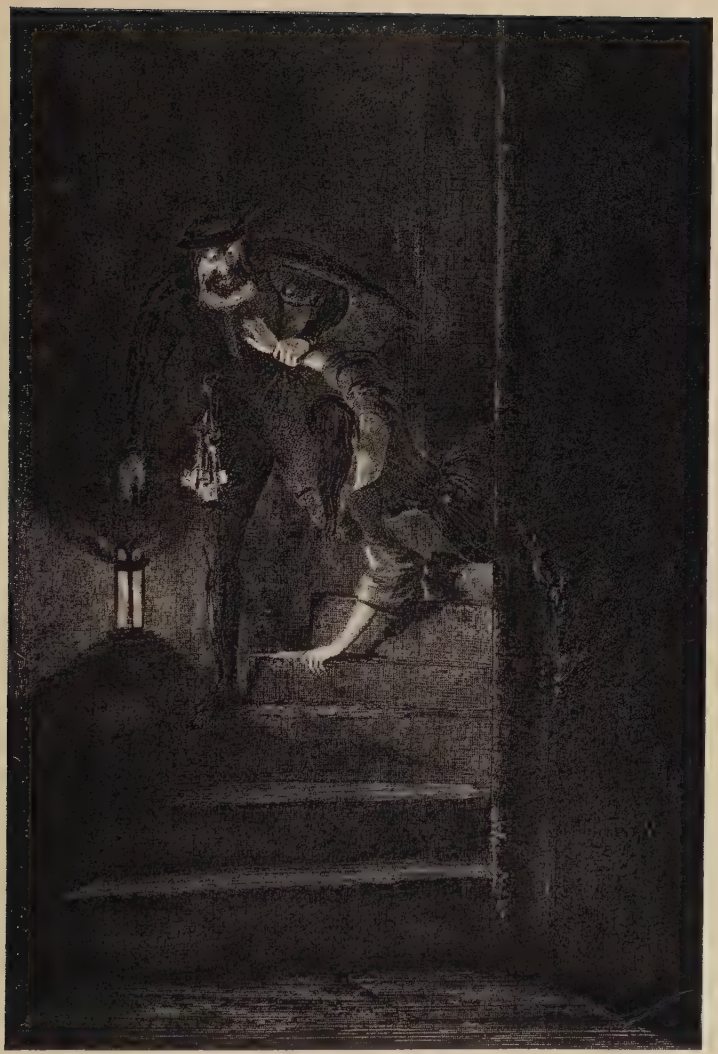
Having seen Cholmondeley safely bestowed, the jailer repaired to the entrance of the subterranean dungeons, aud lighting a torch, opened the door of a small recess, from which he took a mattock and spade. Armed with these implements, he proceeded to the vault, beneath the Devilin Tower, where he commenced digging a grave. After laboring hard for a couple of hours, he attained a sufficient depth for his purpose, and taking the torch, ascended to the small chamber. Lifting the skeleton frame in his arms, he returned to the vault. In placing the torch on the ground it upset, and rolling into the grave was extinguished, leaving him in profound darkness. His first impulse was to throw down the body, but having in his agitation placed the hands, which were clasped together over his neck, he found it impossible to free himself from it. His terror was so great that he uttered a loud cry, and would have fled, but his feet were rooted to the spot. He sank at last on his knees, and the corpse dropped upon him, its face coming into contact with his own. Grown desperate, at length he disengaged himself from the horrible embrace, and threw the body into the grave. Relieved by this step from much of his fear, he felt about for the spade, and having found it, began to shovel in the mould.

While thus employed, he underwent a fresh alarm. In trampling down the mould, a hollow groan issued from the grave. Trembling in every limb, he desisted from his task. His hair stood erect, and a thick damp gathered on his brow. Shaking off his terrors, he renewed his exertions, and in a short time his task was completed.

He then groped his way out of the vault, and having become by long usage familiarized with its labyrinths, soon reached the entrance, where he struck a light, and having found a lantern, set fire to the candle within it. This done, he returned to the vault, where, to his great horror, he perceived that the face of the corpse was uncovered. Averting his gaze from it, he heaped the earth over it, and then flattened the mass with repeated blows of the spade. All trace of his victim being thus removed, and the vault restored to its original appearance, he took back the implements he had used, and struck into a passage leading in another direction.

Pursuing it for some time, he came to a strong door, unlocked it, and ascending a flight of stone steps, reached another arched passage, which he swiftly traversed. After threading other passages with equal celerity, he came to a wider avenue, contrived under the eastern ramparts, and tracked it till it brought him to a flight of steps leading to a large octangular chamber, surrounded by eight deep recesses, and forming the basement story of the Salt Tower, at that time, and for upwards of a century afterwards, used as one of the prison lodgings of the fortress. In a chamber in the upper story of this fortification, now occupied as a drawing-room, is a curious sphere, carved a few years later than the date of this chronicle, by Hugh Draper, an astrologer, who was committed to the Tower on suspicion of sorcery.

Quitting this chamber, Nightgall ascended a winding stone staircase which brought him to an arched door, leading to the room just described. Taking a key from the bunch at his girdle, he unlocked it and entered the room. A female was seated in one corner with her face buried in her hands. Raising her head at his approach, she disclosed the features of Cicely. Her eyes were red with weeping, and her figure attenuated by long suffering. Conceiving from the savage expression of the jailer's countenance that he meditated some further act of cruelty, she uttered a loud shriek, and tried to avoid him.



LAWRENCE NIGHTGALL DRAGGING CICELY DOWN THE SECRET STAIRS IN THE SALT TOWER

"Peace!" cried Nightgall, "I will do you no harm. Your retreat has been discovered. You must go with me to the tower leading to the Iron Gate."

"I will never go thither of my accord," replied Cicely. "Release me, villain. I will die sooner than become your bride."

"We shall see that," growled the jailer. "Another month's captivity will make you alter your tone. You shall never be set free, unless you consent to be mine."

"Then I shall die a prisoner like your other victims," cried Cicely.

"Who told you I had other victims?" cried Nightgall moodily.

"No matter who told me. I have heard Cuthbert Cholmondeley, whom I love as much as I hate you, speak of one—Alexia, I think, she was named."

"No more of this," cried Nightgall fiercely; "come along, or——"

"Never!" shrieked Cicely—"I will not go. You will murder me." And she filled the chamber with her screams.

"Confusion!" cried Nightgall, "we shall be heard. Come along, I say."

In struggling to free herself from him, Cicely fell upon the ground. Regardless of this, Nightgall dragged her by main force through the doorway, and so down the secret staircase. She continued her screams, until her head striking against the stones, she was stunned by the blow, and became insensible. He then raised her in his arms, and descending another short flight of steps, traversed a narrow passage, and came to a dark chamber beneath the tower leading to the Iron Gate.

WEST VIEW OF TRAITOR'S TOWER.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE CONSPIRACY FORMED BY DE NOAILLES; AND HOW XIT DELIVERED A LETTER TO ELIZABETH, AND VISITED COURTENAY IN THE LIEUTENANT'S LODGINGS.

As soon as it was known that the Princess Elizabeth and Courtenay were placed under arrest, the greatest consternation prevailed throughout the Tower. While some few rejoiced in the favorite's downfall, the majority deplored it; and it was only the idea that when Mary's jealous indignation subsided, he would be restored to his former position, that prevented open expression being given to their sentiments. On being made acquainted with what had occurred, Gardiner instantly sought an audience of the Queen, and without attempting to defend Courtenay's conduct, he besought her earnestly to pause

before she proceeded to extremities—representing the yet unsettled state of her Government, and how eagerly advantage would be taken of the circumstances to stir up dissension and rebellion. Mary replied that her feelings had been so greatly outraged that she was resolved upon vengeance, and that nothing but the Earl's life would satisfy her.

"If this is your determination, madam," replied Gardiner, "I predict that the crown will not remain upon your head a month. Though the Earl of Devonshire has grievously offended your Highness, his crime is not treason. And if you put him to death for this offence, you will alienate the hearts of all your subjects."

"Be it so," replied Mary sternly. "No personal consideration shall deter me from my just revenge."

"And what of the Princess Elizabeth?" asked the Bishop.

"She shall share his fate," answered the Queen.

"This must not be, my gracious mistress," cried Gardiner, throwing himself at her feet. "Here I will remain till I have driven these dark and vindictive feelings from your breast. Banish the Earl—take his life, if nothing else will content you, but do not raise your hand against your sister."

"Bishop of Winchester," replied the Queen, "how many hours have you knelt before my father, Henry the Eighth, and have yet failed to turn him from his purpose! I am by nature as jealous—as firm—as obstinate, if you will—as he was. Arise."

"No, madam," replied Gardiner, "I will not rise till I have convinced you of your error. Your august father was a prince of high and noble qualities, but the defects that clouded his royal nature would show to double disadvantage in one of your sex. Dismiss all thought of this faithless Earl from your heart—banish him from your presence, from your kingdom—nay, keep him in durance if you will, but use no harsh measures against the Princess Elizabeth. Every step taken against her

will be fearfully resented by the Protestant party, of which I need not remind you she is the representative."

"And what matter if it be, my lord?" rejoined Mary. "I am strong enough to maintain my own authority, and shall be right glad of some plea to put down heresy and schism by fire and sword. You are not wont to advocate this cause."

"Nor do I advocate it now, madam," returned Gardiner. "All I counsel is prudence. You are not yet strong enough to throw off the mask of toleration which you have hitherto worn. Your first parliament has not yet met. The statutes establishing the Reformed religion are yet unrepealed—nay, though I shame to speak it, the marriage of your illustrious parents has not yet been confirmed."

"You *should* shame to speak it, my lord," rejoined Mary fiercely; "for it is mainly by your machinations that the divorce was obtained."

"I own it to my sorrow," replied Gardiner, "but I then owed the same obedience to your illustrious sire that I now owe to your Highness. I did your injured mother great wrong, but if I live I will repair it. This, however, is foreign to the subject. Your Majesty may believe me when I tell you, your worst enemies could not desire you to take a more injudicious step, or one more fraught with danger to yourself than to strain your prerogative against Courtenay and Elizabeth."

"Were I to assent to your request and set them free," replied Mary, after a moment's reflection, "the first act of the Princess would be to unite herself to this perfidious villain."

"I do not think it," replied Gardiner. "But what if she were to do so?"

"*What!*" exclaimed Mary furiously. "The thought revives all my indignation. Am I so tame of spirit that I can bear to see him whom I have loved united to a rival I hate? No, my lord, I am not. This is no doubtful case. I have heard his treachery with my own ears, seen

it with my own eyes, and I will terribly avenge myself. Courtenay never again shall behold Elizabeth. He has breathed his last false sigh, uttered his last perjured profession of love, exchanged his last look, unless they meet upon the scaffold. You know not what an injured woman feels. I *have* the power of avenging myself, and, by my father's head, I will use it!"

"And when you have gratified this fell passion, madam," returned Gardiner, "remorse will succeed, and you will bitterly regret what you have done. Since nothing better may be, and if you will not nobly, and like yourself, pardon the offenders, at least reflect before you act. If you persist in your present intention, it will be the duty of all your faithful subjects to prepare for a rebellion, for such will certainly ensue."

"Make what preparations you deem fitting, my lord," replied Mary. "In my father's time the people did not dare to resist his decrees, however arbitrary."

"The people are no longer what they were, madam, nor are you—for I must make bold to say so—in the position, or backed by the power of your dread father. What he did is no rule for you. I am no advocate for Courtenay—nor for the Princess Elizabeth. Could you avenge yourself upon them with safety, though I should lament it, I would not oppose you. But you cannot do so. Others must bleed at the same time. Remember the Lady Jane Grey and her husband yet live. You will revive their faction, and must of necessity doom them to death to prevent another rebellion. Once begun, there will be no end to bloodshed."

"These are cogent reasons, my lord," returned Mary, after a moment's reflection, "supposing them well founded."

"And trust me, they *are* well founded, gracious madam," replied the Bishop. "Do not sacrifice your kingdom—do not sacrifice the holy Catholic Church which looks to you for support—to an insane thirst of vengeance."

"Gardiner," replied Mary, taking his hand and looking at him earnestly, "you know not how I have loved this man. Put yourself in my position. How would you act?"

"As I am assured your Highness would, if you were not under the dominion of passion," replied the Bishop —"forgive him."

"I would do so," rejoined Mary, "but oh! if he were to wed Elizabeth, I should die. I would rather yield them my crown—my life—than consent to their espousals. But I will not think for myself. Arise, my lord. Give me your counsel, and what you recommend I will follow."

"Spoken like yourself, gracious madam," replied the Bishop. "I was sure your noble nature could soon triumph over unworthy thoughts. Since your Highness thinks it possible Courtenay may wed Elizabeth, I would advise you to detain him for the present a captive in the Tower. But instantly liberate the Princess, dismiss her from your court, and let her retire to Ashbridge."

"I like your advice well, my lord," replied the Queen, "and will act upon it. The Princess shall set out to-day."

"I cannot too highly applaud your Highness's determination," replied Gardiner; "but as you have spoken thus frankly, may I venture to ask whether the Earl's case is utterly hopeless?—whether, after he has sufficiently felt the weight of your displeasure, you will not restore him to your favor—to your affections?"

"Never," replied Mary firmly, "never. And could you counsel it?"

"He is inexperienced, madam," urged the Bishop; "and after this salutary lesson——"

"No more, my lord," interrupted the Queen, a shade passing over her features, "it is too late."

"Too late!" echoed Gardiner. "Am I to understand your Highness has made another engagement?"

"You are to understand nothing more than you are

told, my lord," replied Mary angrily. "In due season you shall know all."

As Gardiner bowed in acquiescence, he perceived the miniature of Philip of Spain lying on the table, and a sudden apprehension of the truth crossed him.

"There is one person upon whom I should chiefly desire your Highness's choice *not* to fall," he said.

"And that is—— ?" interrupted Mary.

"Philip of Spain," answered Gardiner.

"What objections have you to him, my lord?" demanded the Queen uneasily.

"My objections are threefold," rejoined Gardiner. "First, I dislike the tyrannical character of the Prince, which would be ill suited to render your Highness's union a happy one. Secondly, I am assured that the match would be disagreeable to your subjects—the English nation not being able to brook a foreign yoke; and of all dominations none being so intolerable as that of Spain. Thirdly, the alliance would plunge us in endless wars with France—a country that would never tamely submit to such a formidable extension of power as this would prove on the part of its old enemy, Charles the Fifth."

"If not Philip of Spain, whom would you recommend me?" asked Mary, who was anxious to mislead him.

"One of your own nobles," replied Gardiner; "by which means your authority would be unabridged. Whereas, if you wed a prince, odious for his tyranny in the eyes of all Europe——"

"No more of this, my lord," interrupted Mary hastily.

"Madam," said Gardiner, "however I may risk displeasing you, I should be wanting in duty, in loyalty, and in sincerity, were I not strongly to warn you against a match with Philip of Spain. It will be fatal to your own happiness—fatal to the welfare of your people."

"I have already said it is too late," sighed Mary.

"Your Majesty has not affianced yourself to him?" cried Gardiner anxiously.

"Question me no further," rejoined Mary. "What is done is done."

"Alas! madam," cried Gardiner, "I understand your words too well. You have taken a perilous step, at the instigation of evil councillors, and under the influence of evil passions. God grant good may come of it!"

"These are mere surmises on your part, my lord," returned Mary. "I have not told you I have taken any step."

"But your Majesty leads me to infer it," answered the Bishop. "For your own sake, and for the sake of your kingdom, I trust my fears are unfounded."

As he spoke, an usher approached, and informed the Queen that the Imperial Ambassador, Simon Renard, desired an audience.

"Admit him," said Mary. "Farewell, my lord," she added, turning to Gardiner; "I will weigh what you have said."

"Act upon it, gracious madam, if you *can*," rejoined the Bishop. "But if you are so far committed as to be unable to retreat, count upon my best services to aid you in the difficulty."

At this moment Simon Renard entered the audience-chamber, and the expression of his countenance was so exulting, that Gardiner was convinced his conjectures were not far wide of the truth. His first object on quitting the royal presence was to seek out Feckenham, from whom he succeeded in eliciting the fact of the betrothment in St. John's Chapel; and with a breast full of trouble he returned to his own apartments. On the way thither he encountered De Noailles.

"Well met, my lord," cried the Ambassador. "I was about to seek you. So, it seems all our projects are ruined. Courtenay is disgraced and imprisoned."

"His folly has destroyed the fairest chance that ever man possessed," observed the Bishop. "He is now irretrievably lost."

"Not irretrievably, I trust, my good lord," replied De

Noailles "A woman's mind is proverbially changeful. And when this jealous storm is blown over, I doubt not he will again bask in the full sunshine of royal favor."

"Your excellency is in the wrong," rejoined Gardiner. "The Queen will never forgive him, or, what is equally to be lamented, will never unite herself to him."

"You speak confidently, my lord," returned De Noailles gravely. "I trust nothing has occurred to warrant what you say."

"M. De Noailles," said the Bishop significantly, "look to yourself. The party of France is on the decline. That of Spain is on the ascendant."

"What mean you, my lord?" cried the Ambassador eagerly. "Renard has not succeeded in his aim? Mary has not affianced herself to the Prince of Spain?"

"I know nothing positively," replied Gardiner evasively. "I merely throw out the hint. It is for you to follow it up."

"This were a blow, indeed!" cried De Noailles. "But subtle as Renard is, and with all the advantage he has gained, I will yet countermine him."

"You shall not want my aid," returned Gardiner, "provided you hatch no treason against the Queen. And that you may the better know how to act, learn that her Majesty *is* affianced to Philip of Spain."

"Curses on the crafty Spaniard!" exclaimed De Noailles furiously. "But I will yet defeat him."

"The Princess Elizabeth will be liberated to-day, and sent with a strong guard to Ashbridge," remarked Gardiner. "Courtenay will be kept a prisoner in the Tower."

"We must find means to liberate him," rejoined the Ambassador.

"In this you must proceed without my aid," said the Bishop "If it be possible to reinstate the Earl in Mary's favor it shall be done. But I can take no part in aiding his flight."

"Leave it to me, my lord," rejoined De Noailles. "All I require is your voice with the Queen."

"That you may rely on," answered the Bishop.

With this they separated; Gardiner proceeding to his own apartments, and De Noailles bending his steps towards the Green, debating with himself as he wended thither what course it would be best to pursue in the emergency. Nothing occurred to him but expedients so hazardous that he instantly dismissed them. While resolving these matters, as he walked to and fro beneath the avenue, he was accosted by Xit, who, doffing his cap, and making a profound bow, inquired whether the rumor was correct that the Earl of Devonshire had incurred the Queen's displeasure and was imprisoned.

"Ay, marry is it," replied De Noailles.

"I am truly concerned to hear it," replied the mannikin; "and I make no doubt his lordship's disgrace is owing to the machinations of his mortal foe, Simon Renard."

"Thou art in the right," replied De Noailles. "And let it be known throughout the Tower that this is the case."

"I will not fail to spread it among my fellows," replied Xit. "But none can lament it more than myself. I would lay down my life for his lordship."

"Indeed!" exclaimed De Noailles. "This knave may be useful," he muttered. "Harkee, sirrah! Canst thou devise some safe plan by which a letter may be conveyed to the Earl, who is imprisoned in the lieutenant's lodgings?"

"Your excellency could not have chanced upon one more able or willing to serve you," replied Xit. "Give me the letter, and I will engage it shall reach its destination."

"Come to my lodgings this evening," said De Noailles, "and it shall be ready for thee. As yet, my plan is not matured."

"Your excellency may depend upon me," replied the dwarf. "But I conclude, if I perform my task to your satisfaction, I shall be rewarded."

"Amply," replied De Noailles. "Take this purse in earnest of what is to follow."

"I do not desire gold," returned the dwarf, restoring the purse. "What I aspire to is rank. I am tired of being attendant to three gluttonous giants. If the Earl of Devonshire is restored by my means to liberty and to the position he has lost with the Queen, I trust the service will not be unremembered, but that I may be promoted to some vacant post."

"Doubt it not," replied De Noailles, who could scarcely help laughing at the dwarf's overweening vanity. "I will answer for it, if thou performest thy part well, thou shalt be knighted ere a month be past. But I will put thy skill further to the test. The Princess Elizabeth will be removed from the Tower to-day. Thou must find some means of delivering a letter to her, unperceived by her attendants."

"I will do it," replied Xit unhesitatingly. "Knighted, did your excellency say?"

"Ay, knighted," returned De Noailles—"within a month. Follow me. I will prepare the letter."

It being the ambassador's wish to carry on a secret correspondence with the Princess, he pondered upon the safest means of accomplishing his object and chancing to notice a guitar, which had been lent him by Elizabeth, it occurred to him that it would form an excellent medium of communication. Accordingly, he set to work; and being well versed in various state ciphers, speedily traced a key to the system beneath the strings of the instrument. He then despatched it by a page to the Princess, who, immediately comprehending that some mystery must be attached to it, laid it aside to take with her to Ashbridge. De Noailles meanwhile wrote a few hasty lines on a piece of paper, explaining his motive in sending the guitar, and delivering it to Xit, charged him, as he valued his life, not to attempt to give it to the Princess, unless he could do so unobserved.

About noon, Elizabeth, escorted by Sir Edward Hast-

ings, and a large guard, left the palace. She was on horseback, and as she rode through the gateway of the By-ward Tower, Xit, who had stationed himself on Og's shoulder, took off his bonnet, and let it fall as if by accident, on her steed's head. Startled by the blow, the animal reared, and in the confusion that ensued, the dwarf contrived to slip the billet unperceived into her hand. As soon as the cavalcade had passed on, and the dwarf had undergone a severe rebuke from Og and the other warders for his supposed carelessness, he hastened to the Ambassador's room, to relate the successful issue of his undertaking. De Noailles was overjoyed by the intelligence, complimented him on his skill, promised him still higher dignities in case of success, and bade him return in the evening for further orders.

The remainder of the day was consumed by the Ambassador in revolving his project. The more he reflected upon the matter, the more convinced he became that, in the present critical state of affairs, nothing could be done without some daring conspiracy; and after a long debate, he conceived a scheme which would either overthrow Mary's government altogether, and place Elizabeth on the throne, or reduce the former to such an abject state that he could dictate his own terms to her. On consideration, thinking it better not to write to the Earl for fear of mischance, he entrusted Xit with a message to him, earnestly impressing upon the dwarf the necessity of caution.

The subject of all this plotting, it has been stated, was confined in the lieutenant's lodgings. Every consideration due to his rank and peculiar position was shown him by Sir Henry Bedingfeld. He was permitted to occupy the large chamber on the second floor, since noted as the scene of the examinations of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators. He was, however, strictly guarded. No one was allowed to hold any communication with him either personally or by letter, except through the medium of the lieutenant. And every article either of attire or

furniture that was brought him was carefully inspected before it was delivered to him.

Xit who, as a privileged person, went and came where he pleased, found little difficulty in obtaining admittance to the lieutenant's lodgings. But all his cunning could not procure him a sight of the prisoner, and after wasting several hours in fruitless attempts, being fearful of exciting suspicion, he was compelled for that night to relinquish the design. The next day he was equally unsuccessful, and he was almost driven to his wits' end with perplexity, when as he was passing beneath a tree at the southern extremity of the Green, he chanced to cast his eye upwards, and saw a cat spring from one of the topmost branches on to the roof of the Bloody Tower.

"Wherever a cat can go, I can," thought Xit; "that roof reached, I could pass along the summits of the ramparts and fortifications connecting it with the lieutenant's lodgings; and on arriving there, it were easy to descend the chimney, and get into the Earl's chamber. Bravo! that will do."

The plan so enchanted him that he was in a fever to put it in execution. This however, could not take place till night, and retiring to a little distance to survey the premises, he satisfied himself, after some consideration, that he had discovered the chimney communicating with the Earl's room. When the proper time arrived, he cautiously approached the tree, and looking round to make sure no one observed him, he clambered up it with the agility of a squirrel. Notwithstanding his caution, a serious accident had nearly befallen him. Just as he was about to spring upon the wall, the bough on which he stood broke. Luckily he caught hold of a projection of the building, and saved himself. But he was some minutes before he recovered from the fright. The noise, too, had nearly betrayed him to the sentinels, who approached within a few paces of him. But the darkness was so profound that he escaped observation. When

they returned to their posts he proceeded along the ridge of the battlements, and dropping upon the ballium wall, proceeded with the utmost caution to the edge of the ramparts. He then passed on tiptoe close to the guard, and hastening forward, reached the tiled roof of the lieutenant's house, up which he clambered, as noiselessly and actively as the animal he emulated.

On gaining the chimney he was in search of, he untied a cord with which he had provided himself, and securing it to the brickwork, let one end drop down the aperture. He then descended, and soon came to a level with the chamber, and perceiving a light within it, resolved to reconnoitre before he ventured further. Courtenay was asleep on a couch in the corner, while two attendants were likewise slumbering upon seats near the door. At a loss how to act, as he could scarcely awaken the Earl without disturbing the guards, Xit got out of the chimney, and crept cautiously towards the couch. He would fain have extinguished the lamp, but it was out of his reach. Planting himself on the further side of the couch, so as to conceal himself from the attendants, he ventured at length slightly to shake the sleeper. Courtenay started, and uttered an exclamation which immediately aroused his guards.

"Who touched me?" he demanded angrily.

"No one, my lord," replied the foremost of the men, glancing at the door and round the chamber. "Your lordship must have been dreaming."

"I suppose it must be so," replied the Earl, looking round and perceiving nothing. "And yet——"

At this moment a slight pressure on the hand warned him to be silent.

"If your lordship wishes it, we will search the room," observed the second soldier.

"No, no, it is needless," replied Courtenay. "I have no doubt it was a dream."

In a few minutes the soldiers were again snoring, and Xit, popping his head from beneath the coverlet, in a low

tone delivered his message. The Earl expressed his satisfaction, and proceeded to make inquiries respecting the Princess Elizabeth. On learning that she had quitted the Tower the day before, he had much ado to restrain his joy. And when he ascertained by what means the dwarf had obtained access to the chamber, he was desirous to attempt an escape by the same way, but was dissuaded by Xit, who represented to him the risk he would incur, adding that even if he escaped from his present prison, he would be unable to quit the Tower.

The dwarf then departed as he came. Climbing up the chimney, he drew the rope after him, retraced his course over the fortifications; and on reaching the Bloody Tower, contrived, with much exertion, and no little risk, to lay hold of a branch of the tree, down which he clambered. The next day he related the successful issue of his trip to his employer.

De Noailles did not remain idle. He had already mentioned his project to the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Thomas Grey, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, Sir James Croft, Sir Peter Carew, and Sir Thomas Wyat, all of whom eagerly joined in it. With most of these, but especially with Wyat, afterwards the leader of the rebellion against Mary, the main inducement to conspire was aversion to the Queen's meditated alliance with the Prince of Spain. With the Duke of Suffolk and his ambitious brother, Lord Thomas Grey, it was (as De Noailles had foreseen) the hope that in the tumult the Lady Jane Grey might be restored, that purchased their compliance. The conspirators had frequent secret meetings in the apartments of the French ambassador, where they conferred upon their plans. Suffolk, though pardoned for his late treason by Mary, was yet detained a prisoner on parole within the Tower. His brother had not taken a sufficiently prominent part to bring him into trouble. The bravest of their number was Wyat, of whom it may be necessary to say a few words.

Inheriting the wit and valor of his father, the refined

and courtly poet of the same name, Sir Thomas Wyat of Allingham Castle in Kent, had already earned for himself the highest character as a military leader. His father's friend, the chivalrous and poetical Earl of Surrey, in one of his despatches to Henry the Eighth, thus describes his conduct at the siege of Boulogne: "I assure your Majesty, you have framed him to such towardness and knowledge in the war, that (none other dispraised) your Majesty hath not many like him within your realm, for hardiness, painfulness, circumspection, and natural disposition, for the war." Wyat was in the very flower of his age. But his long service—for from his earliest youth he had embraced the profession of arms—had given him an older look than his years warranted. He was of middle size, strongly but symmetrically proportioned, with handsome boldly-carved features, of a somewhat stern expression. His deportment partook of his frank soldier-like character. In swordmanship, horsemanship, and all matters connected with the business of war, he was, as may be supposed, eminently skilful.

After much deliberation, it was agreed among the conspirators to have all in readiness for a general insurrection, but to defer their project until the meeting of parliament, when the Queen's intentions respecting her alliance with Spain would be declared, and if what they anticipated should prove true, the whole nation would favor their undertaking.

THE BELL TOWER.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW COURTENAY ESCAPED FROM THE TOWER.

While the great outbreak was thus deferred, it was deemed expedient to liberate Courtenay as soon as possible. Such were the precautions taken by the vigilant Sir Henry Bedingfeld, that this was not so easy of accomplishment as it appeared on the onset. At length, however, all was arranged, and Xit was despatched to the

Earl to tell him the attempt might be made on the following night, when unluckily, just as the mannikin had entered the chimney, one of the guards awakened, and hearing a noise, flew to see what occasioned it. Exerting his utmost agility, the dwarf was soon out of reach, and the attendant could not distinguish his person, but he instantly gave the alarm.

Fleeing for his life, Xit got out of the chimney, hurried along the tops of the ramparts, and jumping at the hazard of his neck into the tree, reached the ground just as the alarm was given to the sentinels. It was past midnight. But Sir Henry Bedingfeld, aroused from his couch, instantly repaired to the chamber of his prisoner. Nothing could be found but the rope by which Xit had descended, and which in his hasty retreat he had not been able to remove. Courtenay refused to answer any interrogations respecting his visitor, and after a long and fruitless search, the lieutenant departed.

The next day, the occurrence was made known to the Queen, and at her request Simon Renard visited the prisoner. Not thinking his place of confinement secure enough, Renard suggested that he should be removed to the Bell Tower—a fortification flanking the lieutenant's habitation on the west, and deriving its name, as has already been mentioned, from the alarm-bell of the fortress, which was placed in a small wooden belfry on its roof. This tower is still in existence, and devoted to the same purpose as of old—though its chambers, instead of being used as prison-lodgings, form the domestic offices of the governor. In shape it is circular, like all the other towers, with walls of great thickness pierced by narrow loopholes, admitting light to the interior. Courtenay was confined in a small room on the basement floor, having a vaulted roof supported by pointed arches of curious construction, with deep recesses in the intervals. From this strong and gloomy cell it seemed impossible he could escape; and having seen him placed within it, Renard departed fully satisfied.

When the intelligence of the Earl's removal was brought to De Noailles, he was greatly disheartened; but Xit bade him be of good cheer, as he still felt certain of effecting his deliverance. Some time, however, elapsed before any new scheme could be devised; when one night Xit appeared with a smiling countenance, and said he had found means of communicating with the prisoner. On being questioned as to how he had contrived this, he replied that he had crept up to a loophole opening into the Earl's chamber, and filed away one of the iron bars; and though the aperture was not large enough to allow a full-grown man to pass through it, he had done so without inconvenience, and under cover of night without being perceived. He then proceeded to detail a somewhat hazardous plan of flight, which Courtenay had determined to risk, provided his friends would second the attempt. All the Earl required was that a well-manned boat should be in waiting for him near the Tower wharf, to put off the instant he reached it.

After some consideration, this plan was held feasible, and Sir Thomas Wyat undertook the command of the boat. A dark night being indispensable for the enterprise, the third from that time, when there would be no moon, was chosen; and this arrangement was communicated by the dwarf to Courtenay. Measures were then concerted between the Earl and his assistant, and all being settled, it was agreed, to avoid needless risk, that the latter should not return again till the appointed night.

On its arrival, Xit, as soon as it grew dark, crept though the loophole, and found the Earl impatiently expecting him. He was alone, for since his removal to so strong a prison it was deemed needless to have an attendant constantly with him. Xit brought him a rapier and dagger, and a long coil of rope, and when he had armed himself with the weapons, they proceeded to the execution of their project. Knocking at the door, the Earl summoned the warder who was stationed outside. The man immediately obeyed the call, and as he opened

the door Xit crept behind it, and while Courtenay engaged the warder's attention, he slipped out, and concealed himself behind a projection in the winding stairs. The Earl having made a demand which he knew would compel the warder to proceed to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, dismissed him.

Quitting the cell, the warder, who had no suspicions, locked the door, leaving the key—as had been foreseen—within it. He then ascended the stairs, and passed close to Xit without perceiving him. As soon as he was gone, the dwarf unlocked the door, and made good his own retreat through the loophole, it being necessary he should give the signal to the party on the river.

Courtenay then hurried up the winding steps. On reaching the upper chamber, he perceived it was vacant, but the open door showed him that the warder had just passed through it. Hastily shutting it, and barring it withinside, he mounted a short flight of steps leading to the roof, where he knew a sentinel who had charge of the alarm-bell was stationed. Before the man, who was leaning upon his partisan, could utter an exclamation, Courtenay snatched the weapon from him, and dealt him a blow that stretched him senseless at his feet. He then quickly fastened the rope to one of the stout wooden supporters of the belfry, and flinging the coil over the battlements, prepared to descend by it.

Possessed of great strength and activity, and materially aided by the roughened surface of the old walls, and other irregularities in the structure, against which he placed his feet, the Earl reached the ground in safety. He was now in the outer ward, near the By-ward Tower. It was so dark that his descent had not been noticed, but he perceived several soldiers passing at a little distance from him, from whose remarks he gathered that they were about to convey the keys of the fortress to the lieutenant.

As soon as they had passed him, he rushed across the ward in the direction of the arched passage leading to the

drawbridge. Here he encountered Og, who was on guard at the time. The gigantic warder immediately challenged him, and presented his huge halbert at his breast. But the Earl, without making any reply, stooped down, and before he could be prevented, darted through his legs. Og, in a voice of thunder, gave the alarm, and was instantly answered by a party of halberdiers, who rushed out of the adjoining guard-room. They were all armed, some with pikes, some with arquebuses, and snatching a torch from the soldier nearest him, Og darted after the fugitive.

By this time the Earl's flight from the Bell Tower had been discovered. On his return, finding the door barred withinside, the warder suspected something wrong, and gave the alarm. A few seconds sufficed to the men-at-arms to break down the door with their bills, and they then found what had occurred. The alarm-bell was instantly rung, and word passed to the sentinels on the By-ward Tower, and on the other fortifications, that the Earl of Devonshire had escaped. In an instant all was in motion. Torches gleamed along the whole line of ramparts; shouts were heard in every direction; and soldiers hastened to each point whence it was conceived likely he would attempt to break forth.

Before relating the result of the attempt, it may be proper to advert to what had been done in furtherance of it by Xit. Having got through the loophole, as before related, the dwarf pursued the course subsequently taken by Courtenay, made a hasty excuse to Og, and crossed the drawbridge just before it was raised. Approaching the side of the river, he drew a petronel, and flashing it, the signal was immediately answered by the sound of muffled oars; and Xit, whose gaze was steadfastly bent upon the stream, could just detect a boat approaching the strand. The next moment, Sir Thomas Wyat sprang ashore, and as Xit was explaining to him in a whisper what had occurred, the alarm was given as above related.

It was a moment of intense interest to all concerned in

the enterprise, and Wyat held himself in readiness for action. On reaching the drawbridge and finding it raised, Courtenay without hesitation bounded over the rails, and plunging into the moat, struck out towards the opposite bank. At this juncture, Og and his companions arrived at the outlet. The giant held his torch over the moat, and perceived the Earl swimming across it. A soldier beside him levelled his arquebuse at the fugitive, and would have fired, but Og checked him, crying, "Beware how you harm the Queen's favorite. It is the Earl of Devonshire. Seize him, but injure him not—or dread her Majesty's displeasure."

The caution, however, was unheeded by those on the summit of the By-ward Tower. Shots were fired from it, and the balls speckled the surface of the water, but without doing any damage. One of Wyat's crew hastened to the edge of the moat, and throwing a short line into the water, assisted the Earl to land.

While this was passing, the drawbridge was lowered, and Og and his companions rushed across it—too late, however, to secure the fugitive. As soon as Courtenay had gained a footing on the wharf, Sir Thomas Wyat seized his hand, and hurried him towards the boat, into which they leaped. The oars were then plunged into the water, and before their pursuers gained the bank, the skiff had shot to some distance from it. Another boat was instantly manned and gave chase, but without effect. The obscurity favored the fugitives. Wyat directed his men to pull towards London Bridge, and they soon disappeared beneath its narrow arches.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW QUEEN MARY VISITED THE LIONS' TOWER; HOW MAGOG GAVE HIS DAME A LESSON; AND HOW XIT CONQUERED A MONKEY, AND WAS WORSTED BY A BEAR.

COURTENAY'S escape from the Tower created almost as much sensation as his imprisonment had done; and while his partisans were cheered by it, his enemies were proportionately discouraged. Several bands of soldiers, headed by trusty leaders, were sent in pursuit of him in different directions; but no trace could be discovered of the course he had taken; nor could all the vigilance of Sir Henry Bedingfeld detect who had assisted him in his flight. After some time, as no tidings were heard of him, it was concluded he had embarked for France. Inspired by jealousy, Mary immediately sent an order to Ashbridge to double the guard over her sister; and she secretly instructed Sir Edward Hastings, in case of any attempt to set her free, to convey her instantly to the Tower. Elizabeth either was severely indisposed, or feigned to be so, and it was bruited abroad that poison had been given her. This rumor, which obtained general credence, as well as others to the effect that her life had been attempted by different means, at length reached the Queen's ears, and occasioned her great distress and annoyance. To remove the suspicion, she commanded Elizabeth's appearance at court. And though the Princess would fain have refused, she was compelled to obey.

Some weeks had now elapsed since Courtenay's flight, and during that time the Queen's anger had so much abated, that Gardiner thought he might venture to solicit his pardon. Representing to her that she had already punished him sufficiently by the disgrace she had inflicted upon him, and that it was desirable to give no pretext for

tumult during the momentous discussions which would take place on the meeting of parliament—then immediately about to be assembled—he urged his suit so warmly, that in the end Mary consented to pardon the Earl, provided he appeared at court within three days.

Intelligence of the Queen's change of feeling was soon conveyed to Courtenay, who had been concealed in an obscure lodging in London, and on the second day he presented himself before her. Mary received him graciously but coldly, and in such a manner as to convince him and his friends, if they still indulged any such hopes, that a restoration to the place he had once held in her affections was out of the question.

"If you are disposed to travel, my lord," she said sarcastically, "I will take care you have such appointments to foreign courts as will best suit your age and inclination."

"Your Majesty has perchance some delicate mission at the court of Madrid which you desire me to execute," replied the Earl significantly.

"Had I any mission to that court," replied the Queen, repressing her emotion, "it is not to your hands I should entrust it. You have offended me once, Courtenay. Beware how you do so a second time. Abandon all hopes of Elizabeth. She never can be—never *shall be* yours."

"That remains to be seen," muttered Courtenay, as he quitted the presence.

The interview over, Courtenay was joined by De Noailles, and from that moment he surrendered himself unresistingly to the designs of the artful ambassador.

Mary had now removed her court to Whitehall. But she frequently visited the Tower, and appeared to prefer its gloomy chambers to the gorgeous halls in her other palaces. One night, an order was received by Hairun, the bearward, who had charge of the wild animals, that on the following day the Queen would visit the menagerie. Preparations were accordingly made for her reception; and the animals were deprived of their supper, that they

might exhibit an unusual degree of ferocity. But though Hairun starved the wild beasts, he did not act in like manner towards himself. On the contrary, he deemed it a fitting occasion to feast his friends, and accordingly invited Magog, his dame, the two other giants, Xit, Ribald, and the pantler and his spouse, to take their evening meal with him. The invitation was gladly accepted; and about the hour of a modern dinner, the guests repaired to the bearward's lodgings, which were situated in the basement chamber of the Lions' Tower. Of this structure, nothing but an arched embrasure once overlooking the lesser moat, and another subterranean room, likewise boasting four deep arched recesses, but constantly flooded with water, now remain. A modern dwelling-house, tenanted by the former keeper of the menagerie in the fortress, occupies the site of the ancient fabric.

Aware of the appetites of his friends, and being no despicable trencherman himself Hairun had provided accordingly. The principal dish was a wild boar, a present to the bearward from Sir Henry Bedingfeld, which having been previously soaked for a fortnight in a mixture of vinegar, salt, bruised garlic, and juniper-berries, was roasted whole under the personal superintendence of Peter Trusbut, who predicted it would prove delicious eating—and the result proved him no false prophet. On the appearance of this magnificent dish, which succeeded the first course of buttered stockfish and mutton pottage, a murmur of delight pervaded the company. The eyes of the giants glistened, their mouths watered, and they grasped their knives and forks like men preparing for a combat to the utterance Magog had seated himself as far from his wife as possible. But she was too much engrossed by the assiduous attention of Ribald to take any particular notice of him.

Peter Trusbut, as usual, officiated as carver. And the manner in which he distributed slices of the savory and juicy meat, which, owing to the preparation it had undergone, had a tenderness and mellowness wholly indescrib-

able, with modicums of the delicate fat, elicited the host's warmest approbation. The giants spoke not a word; and even the ladies could only express their delight by interjections. Reserving certain delicate morsels for himself, Peter Trusbut, with a zeal worthy of the cause in which he was engaged, continued to ply his knife so unremittingly, that no one's plate was for a moment empty, and yet with all this employment he did not entirely forget himself. Hairun was in ecstasies; and while the giants were still actively engaged, he placed before them enormous goblets filled with bragget, a drink composed of strong ale sweetened with honey, spiced and flavored with herbs. At the first pause, the gigantic brethren drained their cups, and they were promptly replenished by the hospitable bearward. By this time the greater part of the boar had disappeared. Its well-flavored back and fattened flanks were gone, and the hams and head alone remained. Seeing that the other guests were satisfied, the pantler, with some little labor, hewed off the two legs, and giving one to each of the unmarried giants, assigned the head to Magog.

"Mauger himself never did his office with greater dexterity than you have displayed in decapitating that wild boar, Master Pantler," observed Magog, smiling, as he received the welcome gift.

"You are not going to eat all that, you insatiable cormorant?" cried his dame, from the other end of the table.

"Indeed, but I am, sweetheart," replied Magog, commencing operations on the cheek; "wherefore not?"

"Wherefore not?" screamed Dame Placida, "because you'll die of an apoplexy, and I shall be a second time a widow."

"No matter," replied the giant, "I'm weary of life, and cannot end it more comfortably. I'll eat in spite of her," he added half aloud.

This last remark, in spite of Ribald's interference, might have called forth some practical rejoinder on the

part of his wife, had not her attention and that of the rest of the company been drawn at the moment towards Xit. Amongst other animals allowed to range about the bearward's house was a small mischievous ape. This creature had seated itself behind Xit's chair, where it made the most grotesque grimaces in imitation of the mannikin. The guests were at first too much occupied to take any notice of its proceedings, and Xit, wholly unconscious of its presence, pursued his repast in tranquillity. The more substantial viands disposed of, he helped himself to some roasted chestnuts, and was greedily munching them, when the monkey stretched its arm over his shoulder, and snatched a handful.

Astonished and alarmed at the occurrence, Xit turned to regard the intruder. But when he perceived the ape's grinning face close to his own, and heard the shouts and laughter of the assemblage, his fear changed to anger, and he immediately attempted to regain what had been pilfered from him. But the monkey was not inclined to part with his spoil, and a struggle of a very comical kind ensued. Xit seized the monkey's paws, and tried to get back the chestnuts, while the latter, gibbering and grinning horribly, laid hold of the mannikin's shock head of hair, and after lugging him tremendously, tore up a large lock by the roots. Enraged by the pain, Xit tried to draw his sword, but finding it impossible, he grasped the beast by both ears, and despite its struggling, squealing, and attempts to bite, succeeded in keeping it at bay.

What might have been the result of the conflict it is impossible to say. But just as Xit's strength was failing, Hairun flew to his assistance, and partly by threats, partly by the application of a switch to its back, drove the monkey into a corner. Xit was highly complimented for his courage, and though he occasionally rubbed his head, these encomiums entirely reconciled him to the loss of his hair. Magog, who cherished some little resentment for his former tricks, laughed immoderately at the incident, and said, "My beard is already grown again, but it will be

a long time before thy rough poll regains its accustomed appearance. Ha! ha!"

In this way the meal was concluded, and it was followed by a plentiful supply of ale, hydromel, bragget, and wine. Nor did Peter Trusbut forget to slip the stone bottle of distilled water into Magog's hand, recommending him on no account to let Xit taste it—a suggestion scrupulously observed by the giant. His guests having passed, a merry hour over their cups, Hairun proposed to conduct them over the menagerie, that they might see what condition the animals were in.

The proposal was eagerly accepted, and providing torches, the bearward led them into a small court communicating by a low arched door with the menagerie. It was then as now (for the modern erection, which is still standing though wholly unused, followed the arrangement of the ancient structure, and indeed retains some of the old stone arches), a wide semicircular fabric, in which were contrived, at distances of a few feet apart, a number of arched cages, divided into two or more compartments, and secured by strong iron bars.

A high embattled wall of the same form as the inner structure faced on the west a small moat, now filled up, which flowed round these outworks from the base of the Middle Tower to a fortification, now also removed, called from its situation the Lions' Gate, where it joined the larger moat.

Opposite the dens stood a wide semicircular gallery, defended by a low stone parapet, and approached by a flight of steps from the back. It was appropriated exclusively to the royal use.

The idea of maintaining a menagerie within the Tower as an appendage to their state, was in all probability derived by our monarchs, as has been previously intimated, from the circumstance of the Emperor Frederick having presented Henry the Third with three leopards, in allusion to his coat-of-arms, which animals were afterwards carefully kept within the fortress. Two orders from this

sovereign to the sheriffs of London, in reference to a white bear, which formed part of his live-stock, are preserved, the first, dated 1253 directing that fourpence a day (a considerable sum for the period) be allowed for its sustenance, and the second, issued in the following year, commanding "that for the keeper of our white bear, lately sent us from Norway, and which is in our Tower of London, ye cause to be had one muzzle and one iron chain, to hold that bear without the water; and one long and strong cord to hold the same bear when fishing in the river of Thames." Other mandates relating to an elephant appear in the same reign, in one of which it is directed, "that ye cause without delay to be built at our Tower of London one house of forty feet long, and twenty feet deep, for our elephant; providing that it be so made and so strong, that when need be, it may be fit and necessary for other uses. And the cost shall be computed at the Exchequer." A fourth order appoints that the animal and his keeper shall be found with such necessaries "as they shall reasonably require." The royal menagerie was greatly increased by Edward the Third, who added to it, amongst other animals, a lion and lioness, a leopard, and two wild cats; and in the reign of Henry the Sixth the following provisions were made for the keeper: "We of our special grace have granted to our beloved servant, Robert Mansfield, esquire, marshal of our hall, the office of keeper of the lions, with a certain place which hath been appointed anciently within our said Tower for them; to have and to occupy the same, by himself or by his sufficient deputy, for the term of his life, with the wages of sixpence per day for himself, and with the wages of sixpence per day for the maintenance of every lion or leopard now being in his custody, or that shall be in his custody hereafter." From this it will appear that no slight importance was attached to the office, which was continued until recent times, when the removal of the menagerie rendered it wholly unnecessary.

Dazzled by the lights, and infuriated with hunger, the

savage denizens of the cages set up a most terrific roaring as the party entered the flagged space in front of them. Hairun, who was armed with a stout staff, laid about him in right earnest, and soon produced comparative tranquillity. Still, the din was almost deafening. The animals were numerous, and fine specimens of their kind. There were lions in all postures,—couchant, dormant, passant, and guardant; tigers, leopards, hyænas, jackals, lynxes, and bears. Among the latter, an old brown bear, presented to Henry the Eighth by the Emperor Maximilian, and known by the name of the imperial donor, particularly attracted their attention, from its curious tricks. At last, after much solicitation from Dames Placida and Potentia, the bearward opened the door of the stage, and old Max issued forth. At first, he was all gentleness, sat upon his hind-legs, and received the apples and biscuits given him like a lapdog, when all at once, his master having stepped aside to quell a sudden disturbance which had arisen in one of the adjoining cages, he made a dart at Dame Placida, who was standing near him, and devouring the fruit and cakes she held in her hand at a mouthful, would have given her a formidable hug, if she had not saved herself by running into his cage, the door of which stood open. Here she would certainly have been caught, if her husband had not rushed to the entrance. Max warily eyed his new opponent, and uttered a menacing growl, but seemed to decline the attack. Dame Placida filled the cage with her shrieks, and alarmed by the cries, all the wild animals renewed their howling. Hairun would have flown to Magog's assistance, but the latter called to him in a voice of thunder to desist.

"I will have no interference," he roared, "old Max and I understand each other perfectly."

As if he comprehended what was said, the bear replied by a hoarse growl, and displayed his enormous fangs in a formidable manner. Dame Placida renewed her cries, and besought Ribald to come to her assistance.

"Stay where you are," thundered Magog, "I will settle this matter in my own way."

"Help! for mercy's sake, help!" shrieked Dame Placida—"never mind him!—help! good Hairun—dear Ribald—help! or I shall be torn in pieces."

Thus exhorted, Ribald and Hairun would have obeyed But they were prevented by Og and Gog, who began to see through their brother's design.

"Leave him alone," they cried, laughing loudly. "He is about to give his dame a lesson."

"Is that all?" replied Hairun. "Then he shall have no interruption from me."

"Barbarian!" cried Dame Placida, appealing to her husband. "Do you mean that I should be devoured! Oh! if ever I *do* get out, you shall bitterly repent your cruel conduct."

"You never *shall* get out, unless you promise to amend your own conduct," rejoined Magog.

"I will die sooner than make any such promise," replied Placida.

"Very well, then," rejoined Magog, "I shall give free passage to Max."

And he slightly moved his person, while the animal uttered another growl. The giants laughed loudly, and encouraged their brother to proceed.

"Make her promise, or let Max take his course," they shouted.

"Fear it not," answered Magog.

"Monster!" shrieked Dame Placida, "you cannot mean this—help! help!"

But no one stirred. And above the roaring of the animals and the angry growling of Max, which Magog had provoked with a sly kick or two, was heard the loud laughter of the gigantic brethren.

"I give you two minutes to consider," said Magog. "If you do not resolve to amend in that time, I leave you to your fate."

And he again goaded Max into a further exhibition of

fury. Dame Placida became seriously alarmed, and her proud spirit began to give way.

"I promise," she uttered faintly.

"Speak up!" bellowed Magog. "I can't hear you for the noise."

"I promise," replied Placida, in a loud and peevish voice.

"That won't do," rejoined her husband. "Speak as you used to do before I married you, and let the others hear you."

"Yes—yes," cried Og, drawing near with the rest. "We must all hear it, that we may be witnesses hereafter. You promise to amend your conduct, and let our brother live peaceably?"

"I do—I do," replied Placida, in a penitential tone.

"Enough," replied Magog. And putting out his arm behind to his wife he covered her retreat, and then suddenly turning upon Max, kicked him into the cage, and fastened the door.

Much laughter among the male portion of the company ensued. But Dame Potentia looked rather grave, and privately intimated to her husband her desire, or rather command, that he should go home. As Peter Trusbut took his departure, he whispered to Hairun, "If ever you think of marrying, I advise you to take good care of old Max. I wish I could borrow him for a day or two."

"You shall have him, and welcome," returned the bearward laughing.

"Thank you—thank you," answered the pantler dejectedly. "Mine is a hopeless case."

Dame Placida appeared so much subdued, that at last Magog took compassion upon her, and led her away, observing to the bearward, "For my sake bestow a plentiful supper on Max. He has done me a good turn, and I would fain requite it."

The rest of the party speedily followed their example, and as Xit took his leave, he remarked to his host, "Nothing but Magog's desire to terrify his dame prevented me from attacking Max. I am certain I could master him."

"Say you so?" replied Hairun; "then you may have an opportunity of displaying your prowess before the Queen to-morrow."

"I will certainly avail myself of it," replied Xit. "Give him a good supper, and he will be in better condition for the fight."

Early on the following day Mary arrived at the Tower. She came by water, and was received at the landing-place by Sir Henry Bedingfeld, who conducted her with much ceremony to the palace, where a sumptuous banquet was prepared, at which the knight assisted as chief sewer, presenting each dish to the Queen on his bended knee, and placing a silver ewer filled with rose-water, and a napkin, before her between the courses. Mary looked grave and thoughtful, nor could the liveliest sallies of De Noailles, who was one of the guests, call a smile to her lips. Renard also was present, and looked more gloomy than usual. The banquet ended, Sir Henry Bedingfeld approached, and laid a parchment before the Queen.

"What is this, sir?" she demanded.

"The warrant for the burning of Edward Underhill, the miscreant who attempted your Highness's life," replied Bedingfeld.

"How!—burned! and I had pardoned him," exclaimed Mary.

"He has been delivered over by the Council to the ecclesiastical authorities, and such is the sentence pronounced against him," returned the knight.

Mary sighed, and attached her signature to the scroll.

"The hour of execution, and the place?" demanded Bedingfeld.

"To-morrow at midnight, on the Tower Green," replied Mary.

Soon after this, it being intimated to the Queen that all was in readiness at the Lions' Tower, she arose and proceeded thither, attended by a large retinue of nobles and dames. On the way a momentary interruption occurred, and Simon Renard, who walked a few paces

behind her, stepped forward, and whispered in her ear, "I beseech your Highness to remain to-night in the Tower. I have somewhat of importance to communicate to you, which can be more safely revealed here than elsewhere."

Mary bowed assent, and the train set forward. A large assemblage was collected within the area in front of the Lions' Tower, but a passage was kept clear for the royal party by two lines of halberdiers drawn up on either side. Og and Magog were stationed at the entrance, and reverentially doffed their caps as she passed. Mary graciously acknowledged the salute, and inquired from the elder giant what had become of his diminutive companion.

"He is within, an' please your Majesty," replied Og, "waiting to signalize himself by a combat with a bear."

"Indeed!" rejoined Mary, smiling. "It is a hardy enterprise for so small a champion. However, large souls oft inhabit little bodies."

"Your Highness says rightly," observed Og. "But your illustrious father, to whom I have the honor to be indirectly related," and he inclined his person, "was wont to observe that he had rather have a large frame and small wit, than much wit, and a puny person."

"My father loved to look upon a *man*," replied Mary, "and better specimens of the race than thee and thy brethren he could not well meet with."

"We are much beholden to your Highness," replied Og; "and equally, if not more so, to your royal father. Whatever we can boast of strength and size is derived from him. Our mother——"

"Some other time," interrupted Mary, hastily passing on.

"Have I said aught to offend her Highness?" asked Og of his brother, as soon as they were alone.

"I know not," returned Magog. "But you fetched the color to her cheeks."

On reaching the steps, Mary tendered her hand to Sir

Henry Bedingfeld, and he assisted her to ascend. A temporary covering had been placed over the gallery, and the stone parapet was covered with the richest brocade, and velvet edged with gold fringe. The Queen's chair was placed in the centre of the semicircle, and as soon as she was seated, Sir Henry Bedingfeld stationed himself at her left hand, and waved his staff. The signal was immediately answered by a flourish of trumpets; and a stout, square-built man, with large features, an enormous bushy beard, a short bull throat, having a flat cap on his head and a stout staff in his hand, issued from a side-door and made a profound obeisance. It was Hairun. His homage rendered, the bearward proceeded to unfasten the door of the central cage, in which a lion of the largest size was confined; and uttering a tremendous roar that shook the whole building, the kingly brute leaped forth. As soon as he had reached the ground he glared furiously at his keeper, and seemed to meditate a spring. But the latter, who had never removed his eye from him, struck him a severe blow on the nose with his pole, and he instantly turned tail like a beaten hound, and fled howling to the farther extremity of the area. Quickly pursuing him, Hairun seized him by the mane, and, in spite of his resistance, compelled him to arise, and bestriding him, rode him backwards and forwards for some time, until the lion, wearying of the performance, suddenly dislodged his rider, and sprang back to his den. This courageous action elicited great applause from the beholders, and the Queen loudly expressed her approbation. It was followed by other feats equally daring, in which the bearward proved that he had attained as complete a mastery over the savage tribe as any lion-tamer of modern times. Possessed of prodigious personal strength, he was able to cope with any animal, while his knowledge of the habits of the beast rendered him perfectly fearless as to the result. He unloosed a couple of leopards, goaded them to the utmost pitch of fury, and then defended himself from their combined attack. A tiger proved a more serious

opponent. Springing against him, he threw the bearward to the ground, and for a moment it appeared as if his destruction was inevitable. But the brute's advantage was only momentary. In this unfavorable position, Hairun seized him by the throat, and nearly strangling him with his gripe, pulled him down, and they rolled over each other. During the struggle Hairun dealt his antagonist a few blows with his fist, which deprived him of his wind, and glad to retreat, he left the bearward master of the field.

Hairun immediately arose and bowed to the Queen, and, excepting a few scratches in the arms, and a gash in the cheek, from which the blood trickled down his beard, appeared none the worse for the contest. So little, indeed, did he care for it, that without tarrying to recover breath, he opened another cage and brought out a large hyæna, over whom he obtained an easy conquest. At last, having finished his performance to the Queen's entire satisfaction, he stepped to a side-door, and introduced Gog and Xit. The latter was arrayed in his gayest habiliments, and strutting into the centre of the area with a mincing step, made a bow to the gallery that drew a smile to the royal lips, and addressing Hairun, called in a loud voice, "Bring forth Maximilian, the imperial bear, that I may combat with him before the Queen."

The bearward proceeded to the cage, and unfastening it, cried, "Come forth, old Max." And the bear obeyed.

Xit, meanwhile, flung his cap on the ground, and drawing his sword, put himself in a posture of defence.

"Shall I stand by thee?" asked Gog.

"On no account," replied Xit in an offended tone. "I want no assistance. I can vanquish him alone."

"Spare thy adversary's life," observed Hairun laughingly.

"Fear nothing," replied Xit; the brave are ever merciful."

"True," laughed Hairun, "I must give a like caution to Max." And feigning to whisper in the bear's ear,

who was sitting on its hind-legs, lolling out its tongue, and looking round in expectation of some eatables, he laughingly withdrew.

Seeing that Max paid no attention to him, Xit drew nearer, and stamping his foot furiously on the ground several times, made a lunge at him, screaming—"Sa-ha! sa-ha! sirrah!—to the combat! to the combat."

Still Max did not notice him, but kept his small red eyes fixed on the gallery, expecting that something would be thrown to him. Enraged at this contemptuous treatment of his defiance, Xit snatched up his cap, flung it in the bear's face, and finding even this insult prove ineffectual, began to prick him with the point of his sword, crying, "Rouse thee, craven beast! Defend thy life, or I will slay thee forthwith."

Thus provoked, Max at length condescended to regard his opponent. He uttered a fierce growl, but would not perhaps have retaliated, if Xit had not persevered in his annoyances. Gesticulating and vociferating fiercely, the dwarf made a number of rapid passes, some of which took effect in his antagonist's hide. All at once, Max made a spring so suddenly, that Xit could not avoid it, struck down the sword, and catching the dwarf in his arms, hugged him to his bosom. All Xit's courage vanished in a breath. He screamed loudly for help, and kicked and struggled to free himself from the terrible grasp in which he was caught. But Max was not disposed to let him off so cheaply, and the poor dwarf's terror was excessive when he beheld those formidable jaws, and that terrible array of teeth ready to tear him in pieces. It had been all over with him, if Gog, who stood at a little distance, and narrowly watched the fray, thinking he had suffered enough, had not run to his assistance. Grasping the bear's throat with his right hand, the giant forced back his head so as to prevent him from using his teeth, while planting his knee against the animal's side, he tore asunder its gripe with the other hand. Hairun, who was likewise flying to the rescue, seeing how matters stood,

halted, and burst into a loud laugh. The next moment Gog gave Max a buffet on the ears that laid him sprawling on his back, and Xit escaped from his clutches. As soon as the bear regained his legs, he uttered a low angry growl, and scrambled off to his cage. For a few seconds Xit looked completely crestfallen. By degrees, however, he recovered his confidence, and bowing to the gallery, said, "I can scarcely with propriety lay claim to the victory, as, if it had not been for my friend Gog——"

"Nay, thou art welcome to my share of it," interrupted the giant.

"If so," rejoined Xit, "I must be pronounced the conqueror, for Max has acknowledged himself vanquished by beating a retreat." As he spoke the bear growled fiercely, and putting his head out of his cage, seemed disposed to renew the fight—a challenge so alarming to Xit, that he flew to Gog for protection, amid the laughter of the assemblage. Mary then arose, and giving a purse of gold to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, to be bestowed upon the bearward, took her departure for the palace.

As Xit was conversing with his friends, maintaining that he should have vanquished the bear if Hairun had not most unfairly instructed the beast what to do, and offering to renew the combat on an early occasion, Lawrence Nightgall, accompanied by two halberdiers, entered the court, and approaching him, directed his companions to attach his person. Xit drew his sword, and called upon Gog to defend him.

"What is the meaning of this, master jailer?" demanded the giant sternly.

"He is arrested by order of the Council. There is the warrant," replied Nightgall.

"Arrested!" exclaimed Xit. "For what?"

"For conspiring against the Queen," replied Nightgall.

"I am innocent of the charge," replied Xit.

"That remains to be proved," replied Nightgall.

"I have no fears," rejoined Xit, recovering his composure,—"but if I must lose my head, like his Grace of

Northumberland, I will make a better figure on the scaffold. I shall be the first dwarf that ever perished by the axe Farewell, Gog. Comfort thyself, I am innocent. Lead me away, thou caitiff jailer."

So saying, he folded his arms upon his breast, and preceded by Nightgall, marched at a slow and dignified pace between his guards.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW EDWARD UNDERHILL WAS BURNT ON TOWER GREEN.

It was the policy of the Romish priesthood, at the commencement of Mary's reign, to win, by whatever means, as many converts as possible to their Church. With this view, Gardiner, by the Queen's desire, offered a free pardon to the Hot-Gospeller, provided he would publicly abjure his errors, and embrace the Catholic faith; well knowing, that as general attention had been drawn to his crimes, and strong sympathy was excited on account of his doctrines, notwithstanding the heinous nature of his offence, among the Protestant party, his recantation would be far more available to their cause than his execution. But the enthusiast rejected the offer with disdain. Worn down by suffering, crippled with torture, his spirit still burned fiercely as ever. And the only answer that could be wrung from him by his tormentors was, that he lamented his design had failed, and rejoiced he should seal his faith with his blood.

On one occasion he was visited in his cell by Bonner, who desired that the heavy irons with which he was loaded should be removed, and a cup of wine given him. Underhill refused to taste the beverage, but Nightgall and Wolfytt, who were present forced him to swallow it. A brief conference then took place between the Bishop and the prisoner, wherein the former strove earnestly to persuade him to recant. But Underhill was so firm in his

purpose, and so violent in his denunciations against his interrogator, that Bonner lost all patience, and cried, "If my words do not affright thee, thou vile traitor and pestilent heretic, yet shall the fire to which I will deliver thee."

"There thou art mistaken, thou false teacher of a false doctrine," rejoined Underhill sternly. "The fire may consume my body, but it hath no power over my mind, which shall remain as unscathed as the three children of Israel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, when they stood in the midst of the fiery furnace. For as the Apostle saith, 'The fire shall try every man's work what it is. If any man's work, that he hath builded upon, abide, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss. But he shall be saved himself, nevertheless, yet as it were through fire.' Even so shall I, despite my manifold transgressions, be saved, while ye, idolatrous priests and prophets of Baal, shall be consumed in everlasting flames."

"Go to,—go to, thou foolish boaster," retorted Bonner angrily; "a season will come when thou wilt bitterly lament thou hast turned aside the merciful intentions of thy judges."

"I have already said that the fire has no terrors for me," replied Underhill. "When the spirit has once asserted its superiority over the flesh, the body can feel no pain. Upon the rack—in that dreadful engine, which fixes the frame in such a posture that no limb or joint can move—I was at ease. And to prove that I have no sense of suffering, I will myself administer the torture."

So saying, and raising with some difficulty his stiffened arm, he held his hand over the flame of a lamp that stood upon the table before him, until the veins shrunk and burst, and the sinews cracked. During this dreadful trial, his countenance underwent no change. And if Bonner had not withdrawn the lamp, he would have allowed the limb to be entirely consumed.

"Peradventure thou wilt believe me now," he cried triumphantly; "and wilt understand that the Lord will so strengthen me with His Holy Spirit, that I may be

'one of the number of those blessed, which, enduring to the end, shall reap a heavenly inheritance.'"

"Take him away," replied Bonner. "His blood be upon his own head. He is so blinded and besotted, that he does not perceive that his death will lead to damnation."

"No, verily," rejoined Underhill exultingly; "for as St. Paul saith, 'There is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, which walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory?'"

"Hence with the blasphemer," roared Bonner; "and spare him no torments, for he deserves the severest ye can inflict.

Upon this Underhill was removed, and the Bishop's injunctions in respect to the torture literally fulfilled.

Brought to trial for the attempt upon the Queen's life, he was found guilty, and received the royal pardon. Nothing could be elicited as to his having any associates or instigators to his crime. And the only matter that implicated another was the prayer for the restoration of Jane, written in a leaf of the Bible found upon his person at the time of his seizure. But though he was pardoned by Mary, he did not escape. He was claimed as a heretic by Bonner, examined before the ecclesiastical commissioners, and adjudged to the stake. The warrant for his execution was signed, as above related, by the Queen.

On the night before this terrible sentence was carried into effect, he was robed in a loose dress of flame-colored taffeta, and conveyed through the secret passages to St. John's Chapel in the White Tower, which was brilliantly illuminated, and filled with a large assemblage. As he entered the sacred structure, a priest advanced with holy water, but he turned aside with a scornful look. Another, more officious, placed a consecrated wafer to his lips, but he spat it out; while a third forced a couple of tapers into his hands, which he was compelled to carry. In this way he was led along the aisle by his guard,

through the crowd of spectators who divided as he moved towards the altar, before which, as on the occasion of the Duke of Northumberland's reconciliation, Gardiner was seated upon the faldstool, with the mitre on his head. Priests and choristers were arranged on either side in their full habits. The aspect of the chancellor-bishop was stern and menacing, but the miserable enthusiast did not quail before it. On the contrary, he seemed inspired with new strength; and though he had with difficulty dragged his crippled limbs along the dark passages, he now stood firm and erect. His limbs were wasted, his cheeks hollow, his eyes deep sunken in their sockets, but flashing with vivid lustre. At a gesture from Gardiner, Nightgall and Wolfytt, who attended him, forced him upon his knees.

"Edward Underhill," demanded the Bishop, in a stern voice, "for the last time, I ask thee dost thou persist in thy impious and damnable heresies?"

"I persist in my adherence to the Protestant faith, by which alone I can be saved," replied Underhill firmly. "I deserve and desire death for having raised my hand against the Queen's life. But as her Highness has been graciously pleased to extend her mercy towards me, if I suffer death it will be in the cause of the gospel. And I take all here present to witness that I am right willing to do so, certain that I shall obtain by such means the crown of everlasting life. I would suffer a thousand deaths—yea, all the rackings, torments, crucifyings, and other persecutions endured by the martyrs of old, rather than deny Christ and His gospel, or defile my faith and conscience with the false worship of the Romish religion."

"Then perish in thy sins, unbeliever," replied Gardiner sternly.

And he arose, and taking off his mitre, the whole assemblage knelt down, while the terrible denunciation of the Catholic Church against a heretic was solemnly pronounced. This done, mass was performed, hymns were chanted, and the prisoner was conducted to his cell.

The brief remainder of his life was passed by Underhill in deep but silent devotion; for his jailers, who never left him, would not suffer him to pray aloud, or even to kneel; and strove, though vainly, to distract him, by singing ribald songs, plucking his beard and garments, and offering other interruptions.

The place appointed as the scene of his last earthly suffering was a square patch of ground, marked by a border of white flint stones, then, and even now, totally destitute of herbage, in front of St. Peter's Chapel on the Green, where the scaffold for those executed within the Tower was ordinarily erected, and where Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard were beheaded. On this spot a strong stake was driven deeply into the ground, and at a little distance from it was piled a large stack of fagots. An iron ring was fixed to the centre of the stake, and to the ring was attached a broad iron girdle, destined to encircle the body of the victim.

As night set in, a large band of halberdiers marched into the Green, and stationed themselves round the stake. Long before this, sombre groups had gathered together at various points, and eyed the proceedings in moody silence. None of the curiosity—none of the excitement—ordinarily manifested upon such occasions was now exhibited. Underhill's crime had checked the strong tide of sympathy which would otherwise have run in his favor. Still, as he had been pardoned by the Queen, and was condemned for his religious opinions only, deep commiseration was felt for him. It was not, however, for him that the assemblage looked grave, but for themselves. Most of them were of the Reformed faith, and they argued—and with reason—that this was only the commencement of a season of trouble; and that the next victim might be one of their own family. With such sentiments, it is not to be wondered at that they looked on sternly and suspiciously, and with the strongest disposition—though it was not manifested otherwise than by looks—to interrupt the proceedings. As it grew dark, and faces could no longer

be discerned, loud murmurings arose, and it was deemed expedient to double the guard, and to place in custody some of the most clamorous. By this means all disposition to tumult was checked, and profound silence ensued. Meanwhile numbers continued to flock thither, until, long before the appointed hour arrived, the whole area from the lieutenant's lodgings to St. Peter's Chapel was densely thronged.

As the bell ceased tolling the hour of midnight, a lugubrious procession slowly issued from beneath the gloomy archway of the Coal-harbor Gate. First came four yeomen of the guard walking two and two, and bearing banners of black silk, displaying large white crosses. Then twelve deacons in the same order, in robes of black silk and flat caps, each carrying a long lighted wax taper. Then a priest's assistant, in a white surplice, with a red cross in front, bareheaded, and swinging a large bell heavily to and fro. Then two young priests, likewise bareheaded, and in white surplices, each holding a lighted taper in a massive silver candlestick. Then an old priest with the mitre. Then two chantry-priests in their robes singing the *Miserere*. Then four Carmelite monks, each with a large rosary hanging from his wrist, supporting a richly-gilt square canopy, decorated at each corner with a sculptured cross, beneath which walked Bonner, in his scarlet chimere and white rochet. Then came Feckenham and other prelates, followed by two more chantry-priests singing the same doleful hymn as their predecessors. Then came a long train of halberdiers. Then the prisoner, clothed in sackcloth and barefooted, walking between two friars of the lowly order of St. Francis, who besought him, in piteous tones, to repent ere it was too late. And lastly, the rear was brought up by a company of archers of the Queen's bodyguard.

As soon as the procession had formed in the order it arrived round the place of execution, the prisoner was brought forward by the two friars, who for the last time earnestly exhorted him to recant, and save his soul alive.

But he pushed them from him, saying, "Get hence, ye popish wolves! ye raveners of Christ's faithful flock! Back to the idolatrous Antichrist of Rome who sent ye hither. I will have none of your detestable doctrines. Get hence, I say, and trouble me no more."

When the friars drew back, he would have addressed the assemblage. But a halberdier, by Bonner's command, thrust a pike into his mouth and silenced him. A wild and uncouth figure, with strong but clumsily-formed, limbs, coarse repulsive features, lighted up by a savage smile, now stepped forward. It was Wolfytt, the sworn tormentor. He was attired in a jerkin and hose of tawny leather. His arms and chest were bare, and covered with a thick pile of red hair. His ragged locks and beard, of the same disgusting color, added to his hideous and revolting appearance. He was armed with a long iron pitchfork, and had a large hammer and a pair of pincers stuck in his girdle. Behind him came Mauger and Nightgall.

A deep and awful silence now prevailed throughout the concourse. Not a breath was drawn, and every eye was bent upon the victim. He was seized and stripped by Mauger and Wolfytt, the latter of whom dragged him to the stake which the poor zealot reverently kissed as he reached it, placed the iron girdle round his waist, and riveted it to the post. In this position, Underhill cried with a loud voice, "God preserve Queen Jane! and speedily restore her to the throne, that she may deliver this unhappy realm from the popish idolaters who would utterly subvert it."

Several voices cried "Amen!" and Wolfytt, who was nailing the girdle at that time, commanded him to keep silence, and enforced the order by striking him a severe blow on the temples with the hammer.

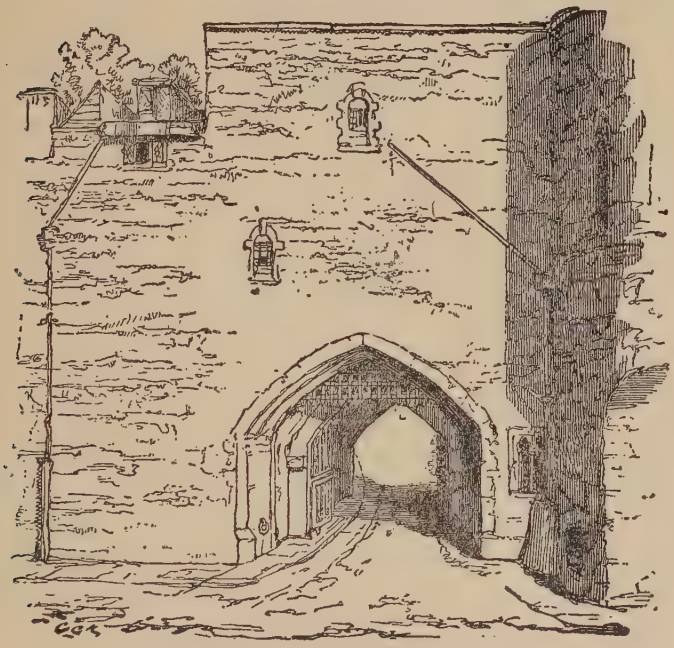
"You might have spared me that, friend," observed Underhill meekly. And he then added, in a lower tone, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak! O Lord, heal me, for all my bones are vexed!"

While the fagots were heaped around him by Mauger

and Nightgall, he continued to pray fervently; and when all was made ready, he cried, "Dear Father, I beseech Thee to give once more to this realm the blessing of Thy Word, with godly peace. Purge and purify me by this fire in Christ's death and passion through Thy Spirit, that I may be an acceptable burnt-offering in Thy sight. Farewell, dear friends. Pray for me, and pray with me."

As he spoke, Nightgall seized a torch and applied it to the fagots. His example was imitated by Mauger and Wolfytt, and the pile was speedily kindled. The dry wood crackled, and the smoke rose in thick volumes. The flames then burst forth, and burning fast and fiercely cast a lurid light upon the countenances of the spectators, upon the windows of St. Peter's Chapel, and upon the gray walls of the White Tower. As yet the fire had not reached the victim; the wind blowing strongly from the west carried it aside. But in a few seconds it gained sufficient ascendency, and his sufferings commenced. For a short space he endured them without a groan. But as the flames mounted, notwithstanding all his efforts the sharpness of the torment overcame him. Placing his hands behind his neck, he made desperate attempts to draw himself farther up the stake, out of the reach of the devouring element. But the iron girdle effectually restrained him. He then lost all command of himself; and his eyes starting from their sockets—his convulsed features—his erected hair, and writhing frame—proclaimed the extremity of his agony. He sought relief by adding to his own torture. Crossing his hands upon his breast, and grasping either shoulder, he plunged his nails deeply into the flesh. It was a horrible sight, and a shuddering groan burst from the assemblage. Fresh fagots were added by Nightgall and his companions, who moved around the pyre like fiends engaged in some impious rite. The flames again arose brightly and fiercely. By this time the lower limbs were entirely consumed; and throwing back his head, and uttering a loud and la-

mentable yell which was heard all over the fortress, the wretched victim gave up the ghost. A deep and mournful silence succeeded this fearful cry. It found an echo in every breast.



GATEWAY OF THE BLOODY TOWER.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW LORD GUILFORD DUDLEY AND LADY JANE WERE ARRAIGNED AND ATTAINTED OF HIGH TREASON; AND HOW THEY WERE PARDONED BY QUEEN MARY.

More than three months had now been passed by Jane in solitary confinement in the Brick Tower. Long as was the interval, it appeared brief to her—her whole

time being devoted to intense mental application or to prayer. She lived only in her books; and addressed herself with such ardor to her studies, that her thoughts were completely abstracted.

Sometimes, indeed, in spite of all her efforts, recollections of the past would obtrude themselves upon her—visions of earlier days and of the events and scenes connected with them would rise before her. She thought of Bradgate and its green retreats—of her beloved preceptor, Roger Ascham—of the delight with which she had become acquainted, through him, with the poetry, the philosophy, the drama of the ancient world. She recalled their long conversations, in which he had painted to her the vanities and vexations of the world, and the incomparable charms of a life of retirement and meditation, and she now felt the truth of his assertions. Had it been permitted her to pass her quiet and blameless career in that tranquil place, how happy would she have been! And yet she did not repine at her lot, but rather rejoiced at it. "Whatever my own sufferings may be," she murmured, "however severely I may be chastened, I yet feel I shall not endure in vain, but that others will profit by my example. If Heaven will vouchsafe me grace and power, not one action of my life but shall redound to the honor of the faith I profess."

One thought she ever checked, feeling that the emotions it excited threatened to shake her constancy. This was the idea of her husband; and whenever it arose she soothed the pang it occasioned by earnest prayer. The reflection that he was now as firm an adherent to the tenets of the gospel as herself, and that by her own resolution she had wrought this beneficial change in him, cheered and animated her, and almost reconciled her to her separation.

So fully prepared did she now feel for the worst shock of fate, that the only thing she regretted was that she was not speedily brought to trial. But she repressed even this desire as inconsistent with her duty, and un-

worthy of her high and holy calling. "My part is submission," she murmured, "and whether my term of life is long or short, it becomes me to feel and act in like manner. Whenever I am called upon, I am ready—certain, if I live devoutly, to attain everlasting happiness, and rejoin my husband where he will never be taken from me."

In this way she thoroughly reconciled herself to her situation. And though in her dreams old scenes and faces would often revisit her, though her husband's image constantly haunted her—and on waking her pillow was bedewed with her tears—still, she maintained her cheerfulness, and by never allowing one moment to pass unemployed, drove away all distressing thoughts.

Not so her husband. Immured in the Beauchamp Tower, he bore his confinement with great external fortitude; but his bosom was a prey to vain regrets and ambitious hopes. Inheriting, as has before been observed, the soaring aspirations of his father, but without his genius or daring, his mind was continually dwelling upon the glittering bauble he had lost, and upon the means of regaining it. Far from being warned by the Duke's fate —far from considering the fearful jeopardy in which he himself stood—he was ever looking forward to the possibility of escape, and to the chance of reinstating himself in his lost position.

Sincerely attached to Jane, he desired to be restored to her rather from the feeling which had led him to seek her hand—namely, a desire to use her as a means of aggrandizement—than from any deep regret at the loss of her society. Not that misfortune had lessened his attachment, but that his ruling passion was ambition, which no reverse could quench, no change subdue. "He who has once nearly grasped a sceptre can never lose all thoughts of it," he exclaimed to himself. "I may perish—but while I live I shall indulge the hope of being King of England. And if I should ever obtain my liberty, I will never rest till I have won back the crown. Jane's name

shall be my watchword—the Protestant cause my battle-cry; and if the victory is mine, she shall share my throne, but not, as heretofore, occupy it alone. Had I been King, this would never have happened. But my father's ambition ruined all. He aimed at the throne himself, and used me as his stepping-stone. Well, he has paid the penalty of his rashness, and I may perchance share his fate. Yet what if I do? Better die on the scaffold than linger out a long inglorious life. Oh that I could make one effort more! If I failed I would lay my head upon the block without a murmur."

The long delay that occurred before his trial encouraged his hopes, and a secret communication made to him by the Duke of Suffolk, who had leave to visit him, that a plot was in agitation to restore Jane to the throne, so raised his expectations, that he began to feel little apprehension for the future, confident that ere long the opportunity he sighed for would present itself.

Ever since Jane's conference with Gardiner, Dudley had resisted all overtures from the Romish priesthood to win him over to their religion, and if his own feelings had not prompted him to this course, policy would have now dictated it. Slight as was the information he was able to obtain, he yet gathered that Mary's determination to restore the Catholic religion was making her many enemies, and giving new spirits to her opponents. And when he found, from the communication of De Noailles, that a plot, having for its basis the preservation of the Reformed religion, now menaced by the proposed alliance with Spain, was being formed, he became confirmed in his opinions.

It was not deemed prudent by the conspirators to attempt any communication with Jane. They doubted much whether she could be prevailed upon to join them—whether she might not even consider it her duty to reveal it; and they thought there would be ample time to make it known to her when the season for outbreak arrived. Jane's partisans consisted only of her father, her

uncle, and ostensibly De Noailles, who craftily held out hopes to Suffolk and his brother to secure their zealous co-operation. In reality, the wily Frenchman favored Courtenay and Elizabeth. But he scarcely cared which side obtained the mastery, provided he thwarted his adversary, Simon Renard.

During the early part of her imprisonment, Jane's solitude was disturbed by Feckenham, who, not content with his own discomfiture and that of his superiors, Gardiner and Bonner, returned again and again to the charge, but with no better success than before. Worsted in every encounter, he became at length convinced of the futility of the attempt, and abandoned it in despair. At first, Jane regarded his visits as a species of persecution, and a waste of the few precious hours allowed her, which might be far more profitably employed than in controversy. But when they ceased altogether, she almost regretted their discontinuance, as the discussions had led her to examine her own creed more closely than she otherwise might have done; and the success she invariably met with, inspired her with new ardor and zeal.

Thus time glided on. Her spirits were always equable, her looks serene; and her health, so far from being affected by her captivity, appeared improved. One change requires to be noticed. It was remarked by her jailer that, when first brought to the Brick Tower, she looked younger than her age, which was scarcely seventeen; but that ere a month had elapsed, she seemed like a matured woman. A striking alteration had, indeed, taken place in her appearance. Her countenance was grave, but so benignant, that its gravity had no displeasing effect. Her complexion was pale but clear—so clear that the course of every azure vein could be traced through the wax-like skin. But that which imparted the almost *angelic* character to her features was their expression of perfect purity, unalloyed by any taint of earth. What with her devotional observances, and her intellectual employments, the mind had completely asserted its domin-

ion over the body; and her seraphic looks and beauty almost realized the Catholic notion of a saint.

She had so won upon her jailer by her extraordinary piety, and by her gentleness and resignation, that he could scarcely offer her sufficient attention. He procured her such books as she desired—her sole request; and never approached her but with the profoundest reverence. From him she learned the fate of Edward Underhill, and during the dreadful sufferings of the miserable enthusiast, when the flames that were consuming him lighted up her prison-chamber, and his last wild shriek rang in her ears, her lips were employed in pouring forth the most earnest supplications for his release.

It was a terrible moment to Jane; and the wretched sufferer at the stake scarcely endured more anguish. Like many others, she saw in his fate a prelude of the storm that was to follow; and passed the whole of the night in prayer that the danger might be averted. She prayed also, earnestly and sincerely, that a like death might be hers, if it would prove beneficial to her faith, and prevent further persecution.

One day, shortly after this event, the jailer made his appearance at an unwonted hour, and throwing himself at her feet, informed her that after a severe struggle with himself, he was determined to liberate her; and that he would not only throw open her prison-door that night, but would find means to set her free from the Tower. When he concluded, Jane, who had listened to his proposal with extreme surprise, at once, though with the utmost thankfulness, declined it. "You would break *your* trust, and I *mine*," she observed, "were I to accept your offer. But it would be useless. Whether should I fly—what should I do were I at large? No, friend, I cannot for a moment indulge the thought. If that door should be opened to me, I would proceed to the Queen's presence, and beseech her Highness to bring me to speedy trial. That is all the favor I deserve, or desire."

"Well, madam," replied the jailer in accents of deep

disappointment, "since I may not have my wish and set you free, I will at once resign my post."

"Nay, do not so, I beseech you, good friend," returned Jane; "that were to do me an unkindness, which I am sure you would willingly avoid, by exposing me to the harsh treatment of some one less friendly disposed towards me than yourself, from whom I have always experienced compassion and attention."

"Foul befall me if I did not show you such, sweet lady!" cried the jailer

"Your nature is kindly, sir," pursued Jane; "and as I must needs continue a captive, so I pray you show your regard by continuing my jailer. It gladdens me to think I have a friend so near."

"As you will, madam," rejoined the man sorrowfully. "Yet I beseech you, pause ere you reject my offer. An opportunity of escape now presents itself, which may never occur again. If you will consent to fly, I will attend you, and act as your faithful follower."

"Think me not insensible to your devotion, good friend, if I once more decline it," returned Jane, in a tone that showed that her resolution was taken. "I cannot fly—I have ties that bind me more securely than those strong walls and grated windows. Were the Queen to give me the range of the fortress—nay, of the city without it I should consider myself equally her captive. No, worthy friend, we must remain as we are."

Seeing remonstrance was in vain, the man, ashamed of the emotion he could neither control nor conceal, silently withdrew. The subject was never renewed, and though he acted with every consideration towards his illustrious captive, he did not relax in any of his duties.

Full three months having elapsed since Jane's confinement commenced, on the first of November her jailer informed her that her trial would take place in Guildhall on the day but one following. To his inquiry whether she desired to make any preparations, she answered in the negative.

The offence I have committed," she said, "is known to all. I shall not seek to palliate it. Justice will take its course. Will my husband be tried with me?"

"Undoubtedly, madam," replied the jailer.

"May I be permitted to confer with him beforehand?" she asked.

"I grieve to say, madam, that the Queen's orders are to the contrary," returned the jailer. "You will not meet him till you are placed at the bar before your judges."

"Since it may not be, I must resign myself contentedly to her Majesty's decrees. Leave me, sir. Thoughts press upon me so painfully that I would fain be alone."

"The Queen's confessor is without, madam. He bade me say he would speak with you."

"He uses strange ceremony, methinks," replied Jane. "He would formerly enter my prison without saying, By your leave; but since he allows me a choice in the matter, I shall not hesitate to decline his visit. If I may not confer with my husband, there is none other whom I desire to see."

"But he is the bearer of a message from her Majesty," urged the jailer.

"If he is resolved to see me, I cannot prevent it," replied Jane. "But if I have the power to hinder his coming, he shall not do so."

"I will communicate your wish to him, madam," replied the jailer, retiring.

Accordingly, he told Feckenham that his charge was in no mood to listen to him, and the confessor departed.

The third of November, the day appointed for Jane's trial, as well as for that of her husband, and of Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was characterized by unusual gloom, even for the season. A dense fog arose from the river, and spread itself over the ramparts, the summits of which could scarcely be discerned by those beneath them. The sentinels pacing to and fro looked like phantoms, and the whole fortress was speedily enveloped in a tawny-

colored vapor. Jane had arrayed herself betimes, and sat in expectation of the summons with a book before her, but it became so dark that she was compelled to lay it aside. The tramp of armed men in front of the building in which she was lodged, and other sounds that reached her, convinced her that some of the prisoners were being led forth; but she had to wait long before her own turn came. She thought more—much more—of beholding her husband than of the result of the trial, and her heart throbbed as any chance footstep reached her ear, from the idea that it might be his.

An hour after this the door of her chamber was unbarred, and two officers of the guard in corslets and steel caps appeared and commanded her to follow them. Without a moment's hesitation she arose, and was about to pass through the door when the jailer prostrated himself before her, and pressing the hand she kindly extended to him to his lips, expressed in faltering tones a hope that she might not be brought back to his custody. Jane shook her head, smiled faintly, and passed on.

Issuing from the structure, she found a large band of halberdiers drawn out to escort her. One stern figure arrested her attention, and recalled the mysterious terrors she had formerly experienced. This was Nightgall, who by Renard's influence had been raised to the post of gentleman-jailer. He carried the fatal axe—its handle supported by a leathern pouch passed over his shoulders. The edge was turned from her, as was the custom on proceeding to trial. A shudder passed over her frame as her eye fell on the implement of death, connected as it was with her former alarms; but she gave no further sign of trepidation, and took the place assigned her by the officers. The train was then put in motion, and proceeded at a slow pace past the White Tower, down the descent leading to the Bloody Tower. Nightgall marched a few paces before her, and Jane, though she strove to reason herself out of her fears, could not repress a certain misgiving at his propinquity.

The gateway of the Bloody Tower, through which the advanced guard was now passing, is perhaps one of the most striking remnants of ancient architecture to be met with in the fortress. Its dark and gloomy archway, bristling with the iron teeth of the portcullis, and resembling some huge ravenous monster, with jaws wide-opened to devour its prey, well accords with its ill-omened name, derived, as before stated, from the structure above it being the supposed scene of the murder of the youthful princes.

Erected in the reign of Edward the Third, this gateway is upwards of thirty feet in length, and fifteen in width. It has a vaulted roof supported by groined arches, and embellished with moulded tracery of great beauty. At the period of this chronicle it was defended at either extremity by a massive oak portal, strengthened by plates of iron and broad-headed nails, and a huge portcullis. Of these defences those at the south are still left. On the eastern side, concealed by the leaf of the gate when opened, is an arched doorway communicating with a flight of spiral stone steps leading to the chambers above, in which is a machine for working the portcullis.

By this time Jane had reached the centre of the arch, when the gate was suddenly pushed aside, and Feckenham stepped from behind it. On his appearance, word was given by the two captains, who marched with their drawn swords in hand on either side of the prisoner, to the train to halt. The command was instantly obeyed. Nightgall paused a few feet in advance of Jane, and grasping his fatal weapon, threw a stealthy glance over his left shoulder to ascertain the cause of the interruption.

"What would you, reverend sir?" said Jane, halting with the others, and addressing Feckenham, who advanced towards her, holding in his hand a piece of parchment to which a large seal was attached.

"I would save you, daughter," replied the confessor. "I here bring you the Queen's pardon."

"Is it unconditional, reverend sir?" demanded Jane coldly.

"The sole condition annexed to it is your reconciliation with the Church of Rome," replied Feckenham.

"Then I at once reject it," rejoined Jane firmly. "I have already told you I should prefer death a thousandfold to any violation of my conscience; and neither persuasion nor force shall compel me to embrace a religion opposed to the gospel of our Saviour, and which, in common with all His true disciples, I hold in utter abhorrence. I take all here to witness that such are my sentiments—that I am an earnest and zealous, though unworthy member of the Protestant Church—and that I am fully prepared to seal my faith with my blood."

A slight murmur of approbation arose from the guard, which, however, was instantly checked by the officers.

"And I likewise take all here to witness," rejoined Feckenham in a loud voice, "that a full and free pardon is offered you by our gracious Queen, whom you have so grievously offended, that no one except a princess of her tender and compassionate nature would have overlooked it; coupled only with a condition which it is her assured belief will conduce as much to your eternal welfare as to your temporal. It has been made a reproach to our Church by its enemies, that it seeks to win converts by severity and restraint. That the charge is unfounded her Highness's present merciful conduct proves. We seek to save the souls of our opponents, however endangered by heresy, alive; and our first attempts are ever gentle. If these fail, and we are compelled to have recourse to harsher measures, is it our fault, or the fault of those who resist us? Thus in your own case, madam—here, on the way to a trial the issue of which all can foresee, the arm of mercy is stretched out to you and to your husband, on a condition which, if you were not benighted in error, you would recognize as an additional grace—and yet you turn it aside."

"The sum of her Majesty's mercy is this," replied

Jane: "she would kill my soul to preserve my body. I care not for the latter, but I regard the former. Were I to embrace your faith, I should renounce all hopes of heaven. Are you answered, sir?"

"I am," replied Feckenham. "But oh! madam," he added, falling at her feet; "believe not that I urge you to compliance from any unworthy motive. My zeal for your salvation is hearty and sincere."

"I doubt it not, sir," rejoined Jane. "And I thank you for your solicitude."

"Anger not the Queen by a refusal," proceeded Feckenham—"anger not Heaven, whose minister I am, by a blind and obstinate rejection of the truth, but secure the favor of both your earthly and your celestial judge by compliance."

"I should indeed anger Heaven were I to listen to you further," replied Jane. "Gentlemen," she added, turning to the officers, "I pray you proceed. The tribunal to which you are about to conduct me waits for us."

Feckenham arose, and would have given utterance to the denunciation that rose to his lips, had not Jane's gentle look prevented him. Bowing his head upon his breast, he withdrew, while the procession proceeded on its course in the same order as before.

On reaching the Bulwark Gate Jane was placed in a litter, stationed there for her reception, and conveyed through vast crowds of spectators, who, however, were unable to obtain even a glimpse of her, to Guildhall, where she was immediately brought before her judges. The sight of her husband standing at the bar, guarded by two halberdiers, well-nigh overpowered her; but she was immediately reassured by his calm, collected, and even haughty demeanor. He cast a single glance of the deepest affection at her, and then fixed his gaze upon the Marquis of Winchester, high treasurer of the realm, who officiated as chief judge.

On the left of Lord Guilford Dudley, on a lower platform, stood his faithful esquire, Cuthbert Cholmondeley,

charged with abetting him in his treasonable practices. A vacant place on this side of her husband was allotted to Jane. Cranmer, having already been tried and attainted, was removed The proceedings were soon ended, for the arraigned parties confessed their indictments, and judgment was pronounced upon them. Before they were removed, Lord Guilford turned to his consort, and said in a low voice, "Be of good cheer, Jane. No ill will befall you. Our judges will speedily take our places."

Jane looked at him for a moment, as if she did not comprehend his meaning, and then replied in the same tone, "I only required to see you so resigned to your fate, my dear lord, to make me wholly indifferent to mine. May we mount the scaffold together with as much firmness!"

"We shall mount the throne together—not the scaffold, Jane," rejoined Dudley significantly.

"Ha!" exclaimed Jane, perceiving from his speech that he meditated some new project.

Further discourse was not, however, allowed her, for at this moment she was separated from her husband by the halberdiers, who led her to the litter in which she was carried back to the Tower.

Left to herself within her prison-chamber, she revolved Dudley's mysterious words; and though she could not divine their precise import, she felt satisfied that he cherished some hope of replacing her on the throne. So far from this conjecture affording her comfort, it deeply distressed her, and for the first time for a long period her constancy was shaken. When her jailer visited her he found her in the deepest affliction.

"Alas! madam," he observed in a tone of great commiseration, "I have heard the result of your trial, but the Queen may yet show you compassion."

"It is not for myself I lament," returned Jane, raising her head, and drying her tears, "but for my husband."

"Her Majesty's clemency may be extended towards him likewise," remarked the jailer.

"Not so," returned Jane; "we have both offended her too deeply for forgiveness, and justice requires that we should expiate our offence with our lives. But you mistake me, friend. It is not because my husband is condemned as a traitor that I grieve, but because he still nourishes vain and aspiring thoughts. I will trust you, knowing that you are worthy of confidence. If you can find means of communicating with Lord Guilford Dudley for one moment, tell him I entreat him to abandon all hopes of escape, or of restoration to his fallen state, and earnestly implore him to think only of that everlasting kingdom which we shall soon inherit together. Will you do this?"

"Assuredly, madam, if I can accomplish it with safety," replied the jailer.

"Add also," pursued Jane, "that if Mary would resign her throne to me, I would not ascend it."

"I will not fail, madam," rejoined the jailer.

Just as he was about to depart steps were heard on the staircase, and Sir Henry Bedingfeld, attended by a couple of halberdiers, entered the chamber. He held a scroll of parchment in his hand.

"You are the bearer of my death-warrant, I perceive, sir," said Jane, rising at his approach, but without displaying any emotion.

"On the contrary, madam," returned Sir Henry kindly, "it rejoices me to say that I am a bearer of her Majesty's pardon."

"Clogged by the condition of my becoming a Catholic, I presume?" rejoined Jane disdainfully.

"Clogged by no condition," replied Bedingfeld, "except that of your living in retirement."

Jane could scarcely credit her senses, and she looked so bewildered that the knight repeated what he had said.

"And my husband?" demanded Jane eagerly.

"He too is free," replied Bedingfeld; "and on the same terms as yourself. You are both at liberty to quit the Tower as soon as you think proper. Lord Guilford Dud-

ley has already been apprised of her Highness's clemency and will join you here in a few minutes."

Jane heard no more. The sudden revulsion of feeling produced by this joyful intelligence was too much for her; and uttering a faint cry, she sank senseless into the arms of the old knight.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF JANE'S RETURN TO SION HOUSE; AND OF HER ENDEAVORS TO DISSUADE HER HUSBAND FROM JOINING THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST QUEEN MARY.

That night Lord Guilford Dudley and Jane, attended by Cholmondeley who was included in the pardon, left the Tower, and repaired to Sion House. On finding herself once more restored to freedom, and an inmate of the house she loved so well, Jane was completely prostrated. Joy was more difficult to bear than affliction; and the firmness that had sustained her throughout her severest trials now altogether forsook her. But a few days brought back her calmness, and she poured forth her heartfelt thanks to that beneficent Being, who had restored her to so much felicity. Measureless content seemed hers, and as she traversed the long galleries and halls of the ancient mansion, as she wandered through its garden walks, or by the river's side, she felt that even in her proudest moment she had never known a tithe of the happiness she now experienced.

Day after day flew rapidly by, and pursuing nearly the same course she had adopted in prison, she never allowed an hour to pass that was not profitably employed. But she observed with concern that her husband did not share her happiness. He grew moody and discontented, and became far more reserved than she had heretofore known him. Shunning her society, he secluded himself in his chamber, to which he admitted no one but Cholmondeley.

This conduct Jane attributed in some degree to the effect produced upon his spirits by the reverse of fortune he had sustained, and by his long imprisonment. But she could not help fearing, though he did not confide the secrets of his bosom to her, that he still cherished the project he had darkly hinted at. She was confirmed in this opinion by the frequent visits of her father, who like her husband had an anxious look, and by other guests who arrived at nightfall, and departed as secretly as they came,

As soon as this conviction seized her, she determined, at the hazard of incurring his displeasure, to speak to her husband on the subject; and accordingly, one day, when he entered her room with a moodier brow than usual, she remarked, "I have observed with much uneasiness, dear Dudley, that ever since our release from imprisonment, a gradually-increasing gloom has taken possession of you. You shun my regards, and avoid my society—nay, you do not even converse with me, unless I wring a few reluctant answers from you. To what must I attribute this change?"

"To anything but want of affection for you, dear Jane," replied Dudley, with a melancholy smile, while he fondly pressed her hand. "You had once secrets from me; it is my turn to retaliate, and be mysterious towards you."

"You will not suppose me influenced by idle curiosity if I entreat to be admitted to your confidence, my dear lord," replied Jane. "Seeing you thus oppressed with care, and knowing how much relief is afforded by sharing the burden with another, I urge you, for your own sake, to impart the cause of your anxiety to me. If I cannot give you counsel, I can sympathy."

Dudley shook his head, and made a slight effort to change the conversation.

"I will not be turned from my purpose," persisted Jane; "I am the truest friend you have on earth, and deserve to be trusted."

"I *would* trust you, Jane, if I dared," replied Dudley.

"Dared!" she echoed. "What is there that a husband dares not confide to his wife?"

"In this instance much," answered Dudley; "nor can I tell you what occasions the gloom you have noticed, until I have your plighted word that you will not reveal aught I may say to you. And further, that you will act according to my wishes."

"Dudley," returned Jane gravely, "your demand convinces me that my suspicions are correct. What need of binding me to secrecy, and exacting my obedience, unless you are acting wrongfully, and desire me to do so likewise? Shall I tell why you fear I should divulge your secret—why you are apprehensive I should hesitate to obey your commands? You are plotting against the Queen, and dread I should interfere with you."

"I have no such fears," replied Dudley sternly.

"Then you own that I am right?" cried Jane anxiously.

"You are so far right," replied Dudley, "that I am resolved to depose Mary, and restore you to the throne, of which she has unjustly deprived you."

"Not unjustly, Dudley, for she is the rightful Queen, and I was an usurper," replied Jane. "But oh! my dear, dear lord, can you have the ingratitude—for I will use no harsher term—to requite her clemency thus?"

"I owe her no thanks," replied Dudley fiercely. "I have solicited no grace from her, and if she has pardoned me, it was of her own free will. It is part of her present policy to affect the merciful. But she showed no mercy towards my father."

"And does not your present conduct, dear Dudley, prove how necessary it is for princes, who would preserve their government undisturbed, to shut their hearts to compassion?" returned Jane. "You will fail in this enterprise if you proceed in it. And even I, who love you most, and am most earnest for your happiness and honor, do not desire it to succeed. It is based upon injustice, and will have no support from the right-minded."

"Tush!" cried Dudley impatiently. "I well knew you would oppose my project, and therefore I would not reveal it to you. You shall be Queen in spite of yourself."

"Never again," rejoined Jane mournfully; "never again shall my brow be pressed by that fatal circlet. Oh! if it is for me you are about to engage in this wild and desperate scheme, learn that even if it succeeded, it will be futile. Nothing should ever induce me to mount the throne again; nor, if I am permitted to occupy it, to quit this calm retreat. Be persuaded by me, dear Dudley. Abandon your project. If you persist in it, I shall scarcely feel justified in withholding it from the Queen."

"How, madam!" exclaimed Dudley sternly; "would you destroy your husband?"

"I would save him," replied Jane.

"A plague upon your zeal!" cried Dudley fiercely. "If I thought you capable of such treachery, I would insure your silence."

"And if I thought *you* capable, dear Dudley, of such black treason to a sovereign to whom you owe not merely loyalty and devotion, but life itself, no consideration of affection, still less intimidation, should prevent me from disclosing it, so that I might spare you the commission of so foul a crime."

"Do so, then," replied Dudley, in a taunting tone. "Seek Mary's presence. Tell her that your husband and his brothers are engaged in a plot to place you on the throne. Tell her that your two uncles, the Lords John and Thomas Grey, are conspiring with them—that your father, the Duke of Suffolk, is the promoter, the leader, of the design."

"My father!" exclaimed Jane, with a look of inexpressible anguish.

Add that the Earl of Devon, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Throckmorton, Sir Peter Carew, and a hundred others, are leagued together to prevent the spread of popery in this country—to cast off the Spanish yoke with which the people are threatened, and to place a Protestant monarch

on the throne. Tell her this, and bring your husband—your father—your whole race—to the block. Tell her this, and you, the pretended champion of the gospel, will prove yourself its worst foe. Tell her this—enable her to crush the rising rebellion, and England is delivered to the domination of Spain—to the inquisition—to the rule of the Pope—to idolatrous oppression. Now, go and tell her this."

"Dudley, Dudley," exclaimed Jane in a troubled tone, "you put evil thoughts into my head—you tempt me sorely."

"I tempt you only to stand between your religion and the danger with which it is menaced," returned her husband. "Since the meeting of parliament, Mary's designs are no longer doubtful; and her meditated union with Philip of Spain has stricken terror into the hearts of all good Protestants. A bloody and terrible season for our Church is at hand, if it be not averted. And it *can* only be averted by the removal of the bigoted Queen who now fills the throne."

"There is much truth in what you say, Dudley," replied Jane, bursting into tears. "Christ's faithful flock are indeed in fearful peril; but bloodshed and rebellion will not set them right. Mary is our liege mistress, and if we rise against her we commit a grievous sin against Heaven, and a crime against the state."

"Crime or not," replied Dudley, "the English nation will never endure a Spanish yoke, nor submit to the supremacy of the see of Rome. Jane, I now tell you that this plot may be revealed—may be defeated; but another will be instantly hatched, for the minds of all true Englishmen are discontented, and Mary will never maintain her sovereignty while she professes this hateful faith, and holds to her resolution of wedding a foreign prince."

"If this be so, still I have no title to the throne," rejoined Jane. "The Princess Elizabeth is next in succession, and a Protestant."

"I need scarcely remind you," replied Dudley, "that the act just passed, annulling the divorce of Henry the Eighth from Catherine of Arragon, has annihilated Elizabeth's claims by rendering her illegitimate. Besides, she has of late shown a disposition to embrace her sister's creed."

"It may be so given out—nay, she may encourage the notion herself," replied Jane; "but I know Elizabeth too well to believe for a moment she could abandon her faith."

"It is enough for me she has *feigned* to do so," replied Dudley, "and by this means alienated her party. On *you*, Jane, the people's hopes are fixed. Do not disappoint them."

"Cease to importune me further, my dear lord. I cannot govern myself—still less, a great nation."

"You shall occupy the throne, and entrust the reins of government to me," observed Dudley.

"There your ambitious designs peep forth, my lord," rejoined Jane. "It is for yourself, not for me, you are plotting. You would be King."

"I would," returned Dudley. "There is no need to mask my wishes now."

"Sooner than this shall be," rejoined Jane severely, "I will hasten to Whitehall, and warn Mary of her danger."

"Do so," replied Dudley, "and take your last farewell of me. You are aware of the nature of the plot—of the names and object of those concerned in it. Reveal all—make your own terms with the Queen. But think not you can check it. We have gone too far to retreat. When the royal guards come hither to convey me to the Tower, they will not find their prey, but they will soon hear of me. You will precipitate measures, but you will not prevent them. Go, madam."

"Dudley," replied Jane, falling at his feet, "by your love for me—by your allegiance to your sovereign—by your duty to your Maker—by every consideration that

weighs with you—I implore you to relinquish your design."

"I have already told you my fixed determination, madam," he returned, repulsing her. "Act as you think proper."

Jane arose and walked slowly towards the door. Dudley laid his hand upon his sword, half drew it, and then thrusting it back into the scabbard, muttered between his ground teeth, "No, no—let her go. She dares not betray me."

As Jane reached the door her strength failed her, and she caught against the hangings for support. "Dudley," she murmured, "help me—I faint'.'

In an instant he was by her side.

"You cannot betray your husband?" he said, catching her in his arms.

"I cannot—I cannot," she murmured, as her head fell upon his bosom.

Jane kept her husband's secret. But her own peace of mind was utterly gone. Her walks—her studies—her occupations had no longer any charms for her. Even devotion had lost its solace. She could no longer examine her breast as heretofore—no longer believe herself reproachless! She felt she was an accessory to the great crime about to be committed, and with a sad presentiment of the result, she became a prey to grief, almost to despair.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW XIT WAS IMPRISONED IN THE CONSTABLE TOWER; AND HOW HE WAS WEDDED TO THE "SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER."

Persuading himself that his capture was matter of jest, Xit kept up his braggadocio air and gait, until he found himself within a few paces of the Constable Tower a fortification situated on the east of the White Tower,

and resembling in its style of architecture, though somewhat smaller in size, the corresponding structure on the west, the Beauchamp Tower. As Nightgall pointed to this building, and told him with a malicious grin that it was destined to be his lodging, the dwarf's countenance fell. All his heroism forsook him; and casting a half-angry, half-fearful look at his guards, who were laughing loudly at his terrors, he darted suddenly backwards, and made towards a door in the north-east turret of the White Tower.

Nightgall and the guards, not contemplating any such attempt, were taken completely by surprise, but immediately started after him. Darting between the legs of the sentinel stationed at the entrance of the turret, who laughingly presented his partisan at him, Xit hurried up the circular staircase leading to the roof. His pursuers were quickly after him, shouting to him to stop, and threatening to punish him severely when they caught him. But the louder they shouted, the swifter the dwarf fled; and being endowed with extraordinary agility arrived in a few seconds at the doorway leading to the roof. Here half-a-dozen soldiers, summoned by the cries, were assembled to stop the fugitive. On seeing Xit, with whose person they were well acquainted—never supposing he could be the runaway—they inquired what was the matter.

"The prisoner! the prisoner!" shouted Xit, instantly perceiving their mistake, and pushing through them, "Where is he? What have you done with him?"

"No one has passed us," replied the soldiers. "Who is it?"

"Lawrence Nightgall," replied Xit, keeping as clear of them as he could. "He has been arrested by an order from the Privy Council, and has escaped."

At this moment Nightgall made his appearance, and was instantly seized by the soldiers. An explanation quickly ensued, but in the meantime Xit had flown across the roof, and reaching the opposite turret at the south-

east angle, sprang upon the platform, and clambering up the side of the building at the hazard of his neck, contrived to squeeze himself through a loophole.

"We have him safe enough," cried one of the soldiers, as he witnessed Xit's manœuvre. "Here is the key of the door opening into that turret, and he cannot get below."

So saying, he unlocked the door and admitted the whole party into a small square chamber, in one corner of which was the arched entrance to a flight of stone steps. Up these they mounted, and as they gained the room above, they perceived the agile mannikin creeping through the embrasure.

"Have a care!" roared Nightgall, who beheld this proceeding with astonishment. "You will fall into the court below and be dashed to pieces."

Xit replied by a loud laugh, and disappeared. When Nightgall gained the outlet he could see nothing of him, and after calling to him for some time and receiving no answer, the party adjourned to the leads, where they found he had gained the cupola of the turret, and having clambered up the vane, had seated himself in the crown by which it was surmounted. In this elevated, and as he fancied, secure position he derided his pursuers, and snapping off a piece of the ironwork, threw it at Nightgall, and with so good an aim that it struck him in the face.

A council of war was now held, and it was resolved to summon the fugitive to surrender; when, if he refused to comply, means must be taken to dislodge him. Meanwhile, the object of this consultation had been discovered from below. His screams and antics had attracted the attention of a large crowd, among whom were his friends the giants. Alarmed at his arrest, they had followed to see what became of him, and were passing the foot of the turret at the very moment when he had reached its summit. Xit immediately recognized them, and hailed them at the top of his voice. At first they were unable to make out whence the noise proceeded; but at length, Gog chanc-

ing to look up, perceived the dwarf, and pointed him out to his companions.

Xit endeavored to explain his situation, and to induce the giants to rescue him; but they could not hear what he said, and only laughed at his gestures and vociferations. Nightgall now called to him in a peremptory tone to come down. Xit refused, and pointing to the crown in which he was seated, screamed, "I have won it, and am determined not to resign it. I am now in the loftiest position in the Tower. Let him bring me down who can."

"I will be no longer trifled with," roared Nightgall. "Lend me your arquebuse, Winwike. If there is no other way of dislodging that mischievous imp, I will shoot him as I would a jackdaw."

Seeing he was in earnest, Xit thought fit to capitulate. A rope was thrown him, which he fastened to the vane, and after bowing to the assemblage, waving his cap to the giants, and performing a few other antics, he slided down to the leads in safety. He was then seized by Nightgall, and though he promised to march as before between his guards, and make no further attempt to escape, he was carried, much to his discomfiture—for even in his worst scrapes he had an eye to effect—to the Constable Tower, and locked up in the lower chamber.

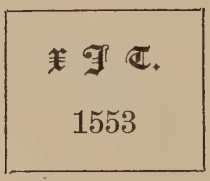
"So, it has come to this," he cried, as the door was barred outside by Nightgall. "I am now a state prisoner in the Tower. Well, I only share the fate of all court favorites and great men—of the Dudleys, the Rochfords, the Howards, the Nevills, the Courtney's and many others whose names do not occur to me. I ought rather to rejoice than be cast down that I am thus distinguished. But what will be the result of it? Perhaps I shall be condemned to the block. If I am, what matter? I always understood from Mauger that decapitation was an easy death—and then what a crowd there will be to witness *my* execution—Xit's execution—the execution of the famous dwarf of the Tower! The Duke of Northumberland's will be nothing to it. With what an air I shall

ascend the steps—how I shall bow the assemblage—how I shall raise up Mauger when he bends his lame leg to ask my forgiveness—how I shall pray with the priest—address the assemblage—take off my ruff and doublet, and adjust my head on the block! One blow and all is over. One blow—sometimes it takes two or three—but Mauger understands his business, and my neck will be easily divided. That's one advantage, among others, of being a dwarf. But to return to my execution. It will be a glorious death, and one worthy of me. I have half a mind to con over what I shall say to the assembled multitude. Let me see. Hold! it occurs to me that I shall not be seen for the railing. I must beg Mauger to allow me to stand on the block. I make no doubt he will indulge me—if not, I will not forgive him. I have witnessed several executions, but I never yet beheld what I should call a really good death. I must try to realize my own notions. But I am getting on a little too fast. I am neither examined, nor sentenced yet. Examined? that reminds me of the rack. I hope they won't torture me. To be beheaded is one thing—to be tortured another. I could bear anything in public, where there are so many people to look at me, and applaud me—but in private it is quite another affair. The very sight of the rack would throw me into fits. And then suppose I should be sentenced to be burnt like Edward Underhill—no, I *won't* suppose that for a moment. It makes me quite hot to think of it. Fool that I was, to be seduced by the hope of rank and dignity held out to me by the French Ambassador, to embark in plots which place me in such jeopardy at this! However, I will reveal nothing. I will be true to my employer."

Communing thus with himself, Xit paced to and fro within his prison, which was a tolerably spacious apartment, semicircular in form, and having deep recesses in the walls, which were of great thickness. As he glanced around, an idea occurred to him. "Every prisoner of consequence confined within the Tower carves his name

on the walls," he said. "I must carve mine, to serve as a memorial of my imprisonment."

The only implement left him was his dagger, and using it instead of a chisel, he carved, in a few hours, the following inscription in characters nearly as large as himself:—



By the time he had finished his work, he was reminded by a clamorous monitor within him that he had had no supper, and he recalled with agonizing distinctness the many glorious meals he had consumed with his friends the giants. He had not even the common prisoners' fare, a loaf and a cup of water, to cheer him.

"Surely they cannot intend to starve me," he thought. "I will knock at the door and try whether any one is without." But though he thumped with all his might against it, no answer was returned. Indignant at this treatment, he began to rail against the giants, as if they had been the cause of his misfortunes.

"Why do they not come to deliver me?" he cried in a peevish voice. "The least they could do would be to bring me some provisions. But, I warrant me, they have forgotten their poor famishing dwarf, while they are satisfying their own inordinate appetites. What would I give for a slice of Hairun's wild boar now! The bare idea of it makes my mouth water. But the recollection of a feast is a poor stay for a hungry stomach. Cruel Og! barbarous Gog! inhuman Magog! where are ye now? Insensible that ye are to the situation of your friend, who would have been the first to look after you had ye been similarly circumstanced! Where are ye, I say—supping with Peter Trusbut, or Ribald, or at our lodging in the

By-ward Tower? Wherever ye are, I make no doubt you have plenty to eat, whereas I, your best friend, who would have been your patron, if I had been raised to the dignity promised by De Noailles, am all but starving. It cannot be—hilloah! hilloah! help!" And he kicked against the door as if his puny efforts would burst it open. "The Queen cannot be aware of my situation. She shall hear of it—but how?"

Perplexing himself how to accomplish this, he flung himself on a straw mattress in one corner, which, together with a bench and a small table constituted the sole furniture of the room, and in a short time fell asleep. He was disturbed by the loud jarring of a door, and, starting to his feet, perceived that two men had entered the room, one of whom bore a lantern, which he held towards him. In this person Xit at once recognized Nightgall, and in the other, as he drew nearer, Wolfytt the sworn tormentor. The grim looks of the latter so terrified Xit, that he fell back on the mattress in an ecstasy of apprehension. His fright seemed to afford great amusement to the cause of it, for he burst into a coarse loud laugh that made the roof ring again. His merriment rather restored the dwarf, who ventured to inquire in a piteous accent, whether they had brought him any supper.

"Ay, ay!" rejoined Wolfytt, with a grin. "Follow us, and you shall have a meal that shall serve you for some days to come."

"Readily," replied Xit. "I am excessively hungry, and began to think I was quite forgotten."

"We have been employed in making all ready for you," rejoined Wolfytt. "We were taken a little by surprise. It is not often we have such a prisoner as you."

"I should think not," returned Xit, whose vanity was tickled by the remark. "I was determined to let posterity know that *one* dwarf had been confined within the Tower. Bring your lantern this way, Master Nightgall, and you will perceive I have already carved my name on the wall."

"So I see," growled Nightgall, holding the light to the inscription. "Bring him along, Wolfytt."

"He will not need, sir," returned Xit, with dignity, "I am ready to attend you."

"Good!" exclaimed Wolfytt. "Supper awaits us, ho! ho!"

They then passed through the door, Xit strutting between the pair. Descending a short flight of stone steps they came to another strong door, which Nightgall opened. It admitted them to a dark narrow passage which, so far as it could be discerned, was of considerable extent. After pursuing a direct course for some time, they came to an opening on the left, into which they struck. This latter passage was so narrow that they were obliged to walk singly. The roof was crusted with nitrous drops, and the floor was slippery with moisture.

"We are going into the worst part of the Tower," observed Xit, who began to feel his terrors revive. "I have been here once before. I recollect it leads to the Torture Chamber, the Little-Ease, and the Pit. I hope you are not taking me to one of those horrible places?"

"Poh! poh!" rejoined Wolfytt gruffly. "You are going to Master Nightgall's bower."

"His bower!" exclaimed Xit, surprised by the term; "what! where he keeps Cicely?"

At the mention of this name, Nightgall, who had hitherto maintained a profound silence, uttered an exclamation of anger, and regarded the dwarf with a withering look.

"I can keep a secret if need be," continued Xit in a deprecatory tone, alarmed at his own indiscretion. "Neither Cuthbert Cholmondeley, nor Dame Potentia, nor any one else, shall hear of her from me, if you desire it, good Master Nightgall."

"Peace!" thundered the jailer.

"You will get an extra turn of the rack for your folly, you crack-brained jackanapes," laughed Wolfytt.

Luckily the remark did not reach Xit's ears. He was

too much frightened by Nightgall's savage look to attend to anything else.

They had now reached a third door, which Nightgall unlocked and fastened as soon as the others had passed through it. The passage they entered was even darker and damper than the one they had quitted. It contained a number of cells some of which, as was evident from the groans that issued from them, were tenanted.

"Is Alexia here?" inquired Xit, whose blood froze in his veins as he listened to the dreadful sounds.

"Alexia!" vociferated Nightgall in a terrible voice. "What do you know of her?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," replied Xit. "But I have heard Cuthbert Cholmondeley speak of her."

"She is dead," replied Nightgall in a sombre voice; "and I will bury you in the same grave with her, if her name ever passes your lips again."

"It shall not, worthy sir," returned Xit, "it shall not. Curse on my unlucky tongue, which is forever betraying me into danger!"

They had now arrived at an arched doorway in the wall, which being opened by Nightgall discovered a flight of steps leading to some chamber beneath. Nightgall descended, but Xit refused to follow him.

"I know where you are taking me," he cried. "This is the way to the torture-chamber."

Wolfytt burst into a loud laugh, and pushed him forward.

"I won't go," screamed Xit, struggling with all his force against the tormentor. "You have no authority to treat me thus. Help! kind Og! good Gog! dear Magog!—help! or I shall be lamed for life. I shall never more be able to amuse you with my gambols, or the tricks that so much divert you. Help! help! I say."

"Your cries are in vain," cried Wolfytt, kicking him down the steps: "no one can save you now."

Precipitated violently downwards, Xit came in contact with Nightgall, whom he upset, and they both rolled into

the chamber beneath, where the latter arose, and would have resented the affront upon his comrade, or, at all events, upon the dwarf, if he had not been in the presence of one of whom he stood in the greatest awe. This was Simon Renard, who was writing at a table. Disturbed by the noise, the Ambassador glanced round, and on perceiving the cause immediately resumed his occupation. Near him stood the thin erect figure of Sorrocold, his attenuated limbs appearing yet more meagre from the tight-fitting black hose in which they were enveloped. The chirurgeon wore a short cloak of sad-colored cloth, and a doublet of the same material. His head was covered by a flat black cap, and a pointed beard terminated his hatchet-shaped, cadaverous face. His hands rested on a long staff and his dull heavy eyes were fixed upon the ground.

At a short distance from Sorrocold stood Mauger, bare-headed and stripped to his leathern doublet, his arms folded upon his bosom, and his gaze bent upon Renard, whose commands he awaited. Nightgall's accident called a smile to his grim countenance, but it instantly faded away, and gave place to his habitual sinister expression.

Such were the formidable personages in whose presence Xit found himself. Nor was the chamber less calculated to strike terror into his breast than its inmates. It was not the torture-room visited by Cholmondeley, when he explored the subterranean passages of the fortress, but another and larger chamber contiguous to the former, yet separated from it by a wall of such thickness that no sound could penetrate through it. It was square shaped, with a deep round-arched recess on the right of the entrance, at the farther end of which was a small cell surmounted with a pointed arch. On the side where Renard sat, the wall was decorated with thumbscrews, gauntlets, bracelets, collars, pincers, saws, chains, and other nameless implements of torture. To the ceiling was affixed a stout pulley with a rope, terminated by an iron hook, and two leathern shoulder-straps. Opposite the doorway stood

a brazier filled with blazing coals, in which a huge pair of pincers were thrust; and beyond it was the wooden frame of the rack, already described, with its ropes and levers in readiness. Reared against the side of the deep dark recess, previously mentioned, was a ponderous wheel, as broad in the felly as that of a wagon, and twice the circumference. This antiquated instrument of torture was placed there to strike terror into the breasts of those who beheld it, but it was rarely used. Next to it was a heavy bar of iron employed to break the limbs of the sufferers tied to its spokes.

Perceiving in whose presence he stood, and what preparations were made for him, Xit gave himself up for lost, and would have screamed aloud, had not his utterance failed him. His knees smote one another; his hair, if possible, grew more erect than ever; a thick damp burst upon his brow; and his tongue, ordinarily so restless, clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Bring forward the prisoner," cried Renard, with a stern voice, but without turning his head.

Upon this, Nightgall seized Xit by the hand, and dragged him towards the table. A quarter of an hour elapsed, during which Renard continued writing as if no one were present; and Xit, who at first was half dead with fright, began to recover his spirits.

"Your Excellency sent for me," he ventured at length.

"Ha!" ejaculated Renard, pausing and looking at him; "I had forgotten thee."

"A proof that my case is not very dangerous," thought Xit. "I must let this proud Spaniard see I am not so unimportant as he seems to imagine. Your Excellency, I presume, desires to interrogate me on some point," he continued aloud. "I pray you proceed without further delay."

"Is it your Excellency's pleasure that we place him on the rack?" interposed Nightgall.

"Or shall we begin with the thumbscrews," observed Mauger, pointing to a pair upon the table; "I dare say

they will extort all he knows. It would be a pity to stretch him out."

"I would not be an inch taller for the world," rejoined Xit, raising himself on his tiptoes.

"I have a suit of irons that will exactly fit him," observed Wolfytt, going to the wall and taking down an engine that looked like an exaggerated pair of sugar-tongs. "These were made as a model, and have never been used before, except on a monkey belonging to Hairun the bear-ward. We will wed you to the 'Scavenger's Daughter,' my little man."

Xit knew too well the meaning of the term to take any part in the merriment that followed this sally.

"The embraces of the spouse you offer me are generally fatal," he observed. "I would rather decline the union, if his Excellency will permit me."

"What is your pleasure?" asked Nightgall, appealing to Renard.

"Place him in the irons," returned the latter. "If these fail, we can have recourse to sharper means."

Xit would have flung himself at the Ambassador's feet, to ask for mercy, but he was prevented by Wolfytt, who, slipping a gag into his mouth, carried him into the dark recess, and by the help of Mauger, forced him into the engine. Diminished to half his size, and bent into the form of a hoop, the dwarf was then set on the ground and the gag taken out of his mouth.

"How do you like your bride?" demanded Wolfytt, with a brutal laugh.

"So little," answered Xit, "that I care not how soon I am divorced from her. After all," he added, "uncomfortable as I am, I would not change places with Magog."

This remark was received with half-suppressed laughter by the group around him, and Wolfytt was so softened that he whispered in his ear, that if he was obliged to put him on the rack, he would use him as tenderly as he could. "Let me advise you as a friend," added the tormentor, "to conceal nothing."

"Rely upon it," replied Xit in the same tone. "I'll tell all I know—and more."

"That's the safest plan," rejoined Wolfytt dryly.

By this time, Renard having finished his despatch and delivered it to Nightgall, he ordered Xit to be brought before him. Lifting him by the nape of his neck, as he would have carried a lapdog, Wolfytt placed him on the edge of the rack opposite the Ambassador's seat. He then walked back to Mauger, who was leaning against the wall near the door, and laid his hand on his shoulder, while Nightgall seated himself on the steps. All three looked on with curiosity, anticipating much diversion. Sorrocold, who had never altered his posture, only testified his consciousness of what was going forward by raising his lack-lustre eyes from the ground, and fixing them on the dwarf.

Wheeling round on the stool, and throwing one leg indolently over the other, Renard regarded the mannikin with apparent sternness, but secret entertainment. The expression of Xit's countenance as he underwent this scrutiny was so ludicrous, that it brought a smile to every face except that of the chirurgeon.

After gazing at the dwarf for a few minutes in silence, Renard thus commenced: "You conveyed messages to the Earl of Devonshire when he was confined in the Bell Tower?"

"Several," replied Xit.

"And from whom?" demanded Renard.

"Your Excellency desires me to speak the truth, I conclude?" rejoined Xit.

"If you attempt to prevaricate I will have you questioned by that engine," returned Renard, pointing to the rack. "I again ask you by whom you were employed to convey these messages?"

"Your Excellency and your attendants will keep the secret if I tell you?" replied Xit. "I was sworn not to reveal my employer's name."

"No further trifling, knave," cried Renard, "or I shall deliver you to the tormentors. Who was it?"

"The Queen," replied Xit.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Renard in surprise.

"Nothing is impossible to a woman in love," replied Xit; "and her Highness, though a queen, is still a woman."

"Beware how you trifle with me, sirrah," rejoined Renard. "It was M. de Noailles who employed you."

"He employed me on the part of her Majesty, I assure your Excellency," returned Xit.

"He deceived you if he told you so," replied Renard. "But now, repeat to me the sum of your conversations with the Earl."

"Our conversations all related to his escape," replied Xit.

"Hum!" exclaimed Renard. "Now mark me, and answer me truly as you value a whole skin. Was nothing said of the Princess Elizabeth, and of a plot to place her on the throne, and wed her to Courtenay?"

"Nothing that I remember," answered Xit.

"Think again!" cried Renard.

"I *do* recollect that upon one occasion his lordship alluded to the Princess," answered Xit, after a moment's pretended reflection.

"Well, what did he say?" demanded Renard.

"That he was sorry he had ever made love to her," replied Xit.

"And well he might be," observed Renard. "But was that all?"

"Every syllable," replied Xit.

"I must assist your memory, then," said Renard. "What ho! tormentors?"

"Hold!" cried the dwarf; "I will hide nothing from you."

"Proceed, then," rejoined Renard, "or I give the order."

"Well, then," returned Xit, "since I must needs confess the whole truth, the reason why the Earl of Devon-

shire was sorry he had made love to the Princess was this. Her Majesty sent him a letter through me, promising to forgive him, and restore him to her affections."

"You have been either strangely imposed upon, or you are seeking to impose upon me, knave," cried Renard. "But I suspect the latter."

"I carried the billet myself, and saw it opened," returned Xit, "and the Earl was so transported with its contents, that he promised to knight me on the day of his espousals."

"A safe promise, if he ever made it," rejoined Renard; "but the whole story is a fabrication. If her Majesty desired to release the Earl, why did she not issue her orders to that effect to Sir Henry Bedingfeld?"

"Because—but before I proceed, I must beg your Excellency to desire your attendants to withdraw. You will perceive my motives, and approve them, when I offer you my explanation."

Renard waved his hand, and the others withdrew, Wolfytt observing to Mauger, "I should like to hear what further lies the little varlet will invent. He hath a ready wit."

"Now, speak out—we are alone," commanded Renard.

"The reason why her Majesty did not choose to liberate the Earl of Devonshire was the fear of offending your Excellency," replied Xit.

"How?" exclaimed Renard, bending his brows.

"In a moment of pique she had affianced herself to Prince Philip of Spain," continued Xit. "But in her calmer moments she repented her precipitancy, and feeling a return of affection for the Earl, she employed M. de Noailles to make up the matter with him. But the whole affair was to be kept a profound secret from you."

"Can this be true?" cried Renard. "But no—no—it is absurd. You are abusing my patience."

"If your Excellency will condescend to make further inquiries you will find I have spoken the truth," rejoined the dwarf. "But I pray you not to implicate me with

the Queen. Her Majesty, like many of her sex, has changed her mind, that is all. And she may change it again for aught I know."

"It is a strange and improbable story," muttered Renard; "yet I am puzzled what to think of it."

"It was no paltry hope of gain that induced me to act in the matter," pursued Xit; "but, as I have before intimated, a promise of being knighted."

"If I find, on inquiry, you have spoken the truth," rejoined Renard, "and you will serve me faithfully on any secret service on which I may employ you, I will answer for it you shall attain the dignity you aspire to."

"I will do whatever your Excellency desires," returned Xit eagerly. "I *shall* be knighted by somebody, after all."

"But if you have deceived me," continued Renard sternly, "every bone in your body shall be broken upon that wheel. Your examination is at an end." With this, he clapped his hands together, and at the signal the attendants returned.

"Am I to remain in these irons longer?" inquired Xit.

"No," replied Renard. "Release him, and take him hence. I shall interrogate him at the same hour to-morrow night."

"I pray your Excellency to desire these officials to treat me with the respect due to a person of my anticipated dignity," cried Xit, as he was unceremoniously seized and thrown on his back by Wolfytt; "and above all, command them to furnish me with provisions. I have tasted nothing to-night."

Renard signified a wish that the latter request should be complied with, and the dwarf's irons being by this time removed, he was led back, by the road he came, to his chamber in the Constable Tower, where some provisions and a flask of wine were placed before him, and he was left alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW XIT ESCAPED FROM THE CONSTABLE TOWER; AND HOW HE FOUND CICELY.

While satisfying his appetite, Xit could not help reflecting upon the probable consequences of the ridiculous statement he had made to Renard, and the idea of the anger of the Ambassador when he discovered the deception practised upon him, occasioned him much internal trepidation. It did not, however, prevent him from doing full justice to the viands before him, nor from draining to the last drop the contents of the flask. Inspired by the potent liquid, he laughed at his former fears, sprang upon the bench, and committed a hundred other antics and extravagances. But as the fumes of the wine evaporated, his valor declined; until, like Acres's, it fairly "oozed out at his fingers' ends."

He then began to consider whether it might not be possible to escape. With this view he examined the embrasures, but they were grated and defied his efforts to pass through. He next tried the door, and to his great surprise found it unfastened; having, most probably, been left open intentionally by Wolfytt. As may be supposed, Xit did not hesitate to avail himself of the chance thus unexpectedly offered him. Issuing forth, he hurried up a small spiral stone staircase, which brought him to the entrance of the upper chamber. The door was ajar, and peeping cautiously through it, he perceived Nightgall and Wolfytt, both asleep; the former reclining with his face on the table, which was covered with fragments of meat and bread, goblets and a large pot of wine; and the latter, extended at full length on the floor. It was evident, from their heavy breathing and disordered attire, they had been drinking deeply.

Stepping cautiously into the chamber, which in size and form exactly corresponded with that below, Xit approached the sleepers. A bunch of keys hung at Nightgall's girdle—the very bunch he had taken once before—and the temptation to possess himself of them was irresistible. Creeping up to the jailer, and drawing the poignard suspended at his right side from out its sheath, he began to sever his girdle. While he was thus occupied the keys slightly jingled, and Nightgall, half-awakened by the sound, put his hand to his belt. Finding all safe, as he imagined, he disposed himself to slumber again, while Xit, who had darted under the table at the first alarm, as soon as he thought it prudent, recommenced his task, and the keys were once more in his possession.

As he divided the girdle a piece of paper fell from it, and glancing at it, he perceived it was an order from the Council to let the bearer pass at any hour whithersoever he would, through the fortress. Thrusting it into his jerkin, and carrying the keys as carefully as he could to prevent their clanking, he quitted the room, and mounted another short staircase, which brought him to the roof.

It was just getting light as Xit gained the battlements, and he was immediately challenged by the sentinel. On producing the order, however, he was allowed to pass, and crossing the roof towards the south, he descended another short spiral staircase, and emerged from an open door on the ballium wall, along which he proceeded.

On the way he encountered three more sentinels, all of whom allowed him to pass on sight of the order. Passing through an arched doorway he mounted a flight of steps, and reached the roof of the Broad-Arrow Tower.

Here he paused to consider what course he should pursue. The point upon which he stood commanded a magnificent view on every side of the ramparts and towers of the fortress. Immediately before him was the Wardrobe Tower—now removed, but then connected by an irregular pile of buildings with the Broad-Arrow Tower—while beyond it frowned the gray walls of the White Tower.

On the left was the large court where the masque had been given by the Earl of Devonshire, at which he had played so distinguished a part, surrounded on the west and the south by the walls of the palace. On the right the view comprehended the chain of fortifications as far as the Flint Tower, with the range of store-houses and other buildings in front of them. At the back ran the outer line of ramparts, leading northward to the large circular bastion still existing, and known as the Brass Mount; and southward to the structure denominated the Tower leading to the Iron Gate, and now termed the Devil's Battery. Farther on, was to be seen London Bridge with its pile of houses, and the tower of St. Saviour's Church formed a prominent object in the picture.

But Xit's attention was not attracted to the view. He only thought how he could make good his escape, and where he could hide himself in case of pursuit. After debating with himself for some time, he determined to descend to the lowest chamber of the fortification on which he stood, and see whether it had any communication with the subterranean passages of which he possessed the keys.

Accordingly, he retraced the steps he had just mounted, and continued to descend till he reached an arched door. Unlocking it with one of the keys from his bunch, he entered a dark passage, along which he proceeded at a swift pace. His course was speedily checked by another door, but succeeding in unfastening it, he ran on as fast as his legs could carry him, till he tumbled headlong down a steep flight of steps. Picking himself up he proceeded more cautiously, and arrived after some time, without further obstacle, at a lofty, and as he judged from the sound, vaulted chamber.

To his great dismay, though he searched carefully round it he could find no exit from this chamber, and he was about to retrace his course, when he discovered a short ladder laid against the side of the wall. It immediately occurred to him that this might be used as a communication with some secret door, and rearing it

against the wall, he mounted, and feeling about, to his great joy encountered a bolt.

Drawing it aside, a stone door slowly revolved on its hinges, and disclosed a small cell in which a female was seated before a table with a lamp burning upon it. She raised her head at the sound, and revealed the features of Cicely.

Xit uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and rushing towards her, expressed his joy at seeing her. Cicely was equally delighted at the sight of the dwarf, and explained to him that she had been thus long forcibly detained a prisoner by Nightgall.

"Your captivity is at an end," said Xit, as her relation was concluded. "I am come to deliver you, and restore you to your lover. I am afraid he won't think your beauty improved—but I am sure he won't like you the worse for that. Come along. Lean on me. I will support you."

They were just emerging from the cell, when hasty footsteps were heard approaching, and a man entered the vaulted chamber bearing a torch. It was Nightgall. His looks were wild and furious, and on seeing the dwarf and his companion, he uttered an exclamation of rage, and hurried towards them. Cicely ran screaming to the cell, while Xit, brandishing Nightgall's own poniard, threatened to stab him if he dared to mount the ladder.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE IMPERIAL AMBASSADORS; AND OF THE SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE-TREATY BETWEEN MARY AND PHILIP OF SPAIN.

On the 2d of January 1554, a solemn embassy from the Emperor Charles the Fifth, consisting of four of his most distinguished nobles, the Count d'Egmont, the Count Lalaing, the Seigneur de Courrieres, and the Sieur

de Nigry, chancellor of the order of the Toison d'Or, arrived in London to sign the marriage-treaty between Philip and Mary which had been previously agreed upon by the courts of England and Spain.

Gardiner, who, as long as he found it possible to do so, had strenuously opposed the match, and had recommended Mary to unite herself to Courtenay, or at least to some English nobleman, finding her resolutely bent upon it, consented to negotiate the terms of marriage with Renard, and took especial care that they were favorable to his royal mistress.

They were as follows: The Queen was to have for her jointure thirty thousand ducats a year, with all the Low Countries of Flanders,—her issue was to be heir as well to the kingdom of Spain as to the Low Countries,—her government was to continue in all things as before,—and no stranger was to be member of the Council, nor have custody of any forts or castles, nor bear any rule or office in the Queen's household, or elsewhere in all England.

To these terms Renard, on behalf of his sovereign, readily assented, and the subject was brought before the Parliament, where it met with violent opposition from all parties. In spite of this Mary asserted her privilege to wed whom she pleased, and after a long and stormy discussion the measure, chiefly through the management of Arundel, Paget, and Rochester, was carried.

During the agitation of the question, Mary deemed it prudent to feign indisposition to avoid receiving an address intended to be presented to her from the Commons imploring her to marry one of her own countrymen. But when at length she could no longer decline giving them an audience, she dismissed them with these words:

"I hold my crown from God, and I beseech Him to enlighten me as to the conduct I ought to pursue in a matter so important as my marriage. I have not yet determined to wed, but since you say in your address that it is for the welfare of the state that I should choose a

husband, I will think of it—nothing doubting I shall make a choice as advantageous as any you may propose to me, having as strong an interest in the matter as yourselves.

While this was going forward, De Noailles and his party had not been idle. Many schemes were devised, but some were abandoned from the irresolution and vacillation of Courtenay; others were discovered and thwarted by Renard. Still, the chief conspirators, though suspected, escaped detection, or rather their designs could not be brought home to them, and they continued to form their plans as the danger grew more imminent with greater zeal than ever.

At one time, it was determined to murder Arundel, Paget, Rochester, and the chief supporters of the Spanish match, to seize the person of the Queen and compel her to marry Courtenay, or depose her and place Elizabeth on the throne. This plan not suiting the views of Lord Guilford Dudley and Suffolk, was opposed by them; and owing to the conflicting interests of the different parties, that unity of purpose indispensable to success could not be obtained.

Elizabeth, as has before been intimated, had dissembled her religious opinions, and though she formed some excuse for not being present at the performance of mass, she requested to have an instructor in the tenets of the Catholic faith, and even went so far as to write to the Emperor to send a cross, a chalice, and other ornaments for the celebration of the religious rites of Rome, to decorate her chapel.

As to Courtenay, he appeared to have become sensible of the perilous position in which he stood, and was only prevented from withdrawing from the struggle by his unabated passion for Elizabeth. Lord Guilford Dudley still cherished his ambitious views, and Jane still mourned in secret.

Matters were in this state at the commencement of the new year, when, as above related, the Ambassadors arrived from the court of Spain. Shortly after their arrival,

they had an audience of the Queen in the council-chamber of the White Tower; and when they had declared in due form that the Prince of Spain demanded her in marriage, she replied with great dignity, but some little prudery.

"It does not become one of my sex to speak of her marriage, nor to treat of it herself. I have therefore charged my Council to confer with you on the matter, and, by the strictest conditions, to assure all rights and advantages to my kingdom, which I shall ever regard as my first husband."

As she pronounced the last words she glanced at the ring placed on her finger by Gardiner on the day of her coronation.

On the following day, the four ambassadors held a conference with Gardiner, Arundel, and Paget. The terms were entirely settled; and on the 12th of January, the treaty was signed, and delivered on both sides.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BY WHAT MEANS GARDINER EXTRACTED THE SECRET OF THE CONSPIRACY FROM COURTENAY; AND OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISCLOSURE.

Three days after the marriage-treaty was signed—namely, on the 15th of January 1554—the lords of the Council, the lord mayor, the aldermen, and forty of the head commoners of the city, were summoned to the Tower, where they were received in the presence-chamber of the palace by Gardiner and Renard; the former of whom, in his capacity of chancellor, made them a long oration, informing them that an alliance was definitively concluded between the Queen and Philip of Spain; and adding, "that they were bound to thank God that so noble, worthy, and famous a Prince would so humble himself in his union with her Highness, as to take upon him rather

the character of a subject, than of a monarch of equal power."

The terms of the treaty were next read, and the chancellor expatiated upon the many important concessions made by the Imperial Ambassadors; endeavoring to demonstrate that England was by far the greatest gainer by the alliance, and stating, "that it was her Highness's pleasure and request, that like good subjects they would, for her sake, most lovingly receive her illustrious consort with reverence, joy, and honor."

No plaudits followed this announcement, nor was the slightest expression of joy manifested, except by the lords Arundel, Paget, and Rochester—the main supporters of the match, as has been previously stated, when it was brought before Parliament. Gardiner glanced at the Council—at the civic authorities—as if in expectation of a reply, but none was attempted, unless their very silence could be so construed. Whatever his real sentiments might be, the chancellor assumed an air of deep displeasure, and turning to Renard, who, with arms folded on his breast, scanned the assemblage with a cold, scrutinizing gaze, asked in an undertone, whether he should dismiss them?

"On no account," replied the Ambassador. "Compel them to give utterance to their thoughts. We shall the better know how to deal with them. My project once carried, and Philip united to Mary," he muttered to himself, "we will speedily cudgel these stubborn English bull-dogs into obedience."

"Renard does not appear to relish the reception which the announcement of her Majesty's proposed alliance has met with," observed De Noailles, who stood in one corner of the chamber with Courtenay. "It will give him a foretaste of what is to follow. Had your lordship been proposed to the assembly, their manner would have been widely different."

"Perhaps so," returned Courtenay, with a gratified smile; "and yet I know not."

"It may be shortly put to the proof," answered De Noailles.

"Never," replied Courtenay; "I will never wed Mary."

"But Elizabeth?" cried the Ambassador.

"Ay, Elizabeth," echoed the Earl passionately, "with, or without a throne, she would be equally dear to me."

"You shall have her and the crown as well," replied De Noailles.

"I care not for the latter, provided I can obtain the former," returned the Earl.

"One is dependent upon the other," rejoined De Noailles. "While Mary reigns, you must give up all hopes of Elizabeth."

"It is that conviction alone that induces me to take part in the conspiracy," sighed Courtenay. "I am neither ambitious to rule this kingdom, nor to supplant Philip of Spain. But I would risk fortune, title, life itself, for Elizabeth."

"I know it," ejaculated De Noailles to himself, "and therefore I hold her out as a lure to you, weak, wavering fool! I will use you as far as I find necessary, but no further. Rash and hare-brained as he is, Lord Guilford Dudley would make the better leader, and is the more likely to succeed. Jane's party is hourly gaining strength. Well, well, I care not who wins the day, provided I foil Renard, and that I will do at any cost."

"A thousand marks that I read your Excellency's thoughts!" cried a martial-looking personage, approaching them. He was attired in a coat of mail, with quilted sleeves, a velvet cassock, cuisses, and buff boots drawn up above the knee; and carried in his hand a black velvet cap, ornamented with broad bonework lace. His arms were rapier and dagger, both of the largest size. "Is the wager accepted?" he added, taking the Ambassador's arm within his own, and drawing him aside.

"My thoughts are easily guessed, Sir Thomas Wyat," replied De Noailles; "I am thinking how prosperously all goes for us."

"Right," rejoined Wyat; "out of that large assemblage three only are favorable to the Imperialists. If you approve it, I will myself—though not a member of the Council—answer Gardiner's speech, and tell him we will not suffer this hateful alliance to take place."

"That were unwise," rejoined De Noailles; "do not meddle in the matter. It will only attract suspicion towards us."

"I care not if it does," replied Wyat; "we are all ready and sure of support. I will go further, if need be, and add, if the Queen weds not Courtenay, a general insurrection will follow."

"Courtenay will never wed the Queen," observed the Earl, who had followed them, and overheard the remark.

"How?" exclaimed Wyat, in surprise.

"No more at present," interposed De Noailles hastily. "Renard's eyes are upon us."

"What if they are?" cried Wyat, glancing fiercely in the direction of the Imperial Ambassador. "His looks—basilisk though they be—have no power to strike us dead. Oh that I had an opportunity of measuring swords with him! He should soon perceive the love I bear his prince and him."

"I share in your hatred towards him," observed Courtenay. "The favor Mary shows him proves the ascendancy he has obtained over her."

"If he retains his power, farewell to the liberty of Englishmen," rejoined Wyat; "we shall become as abject as the Flemings. But I, for one, will never submit to the yoke of Spain."

"Not so loud!" cried De Noailles, checking him. "You will effectually destroy our scheme. Renard only seeks some plea to attack us. Have a moment's patience, and some one not connected with the plot will take the responsibility upon himself."

The prudence of the Ambassador's counsel was speedily exemplified. While the conversation above related oc-

curred, a few words passed between the principal members of the Council, and the heads of the civic authorities, and, at their instance, the Earl of Pembroke stepped forward.

"We are aware, my lord," he said, addressing Gardiner, "that we ought, on the present occasion, to signify our approval of the Queen's choice—to offer her our heartfelt congratulations—our prayers for her happiness. But we shall not seek to disguise our sentiments. We do *not* approve this match; and we have heard your lordship's communication with pain—with sorrow—with displeasure—displeasure that designing counsellors should have prevailed upon her Highness to take a step fatal to her own happiness, and to the welfare of her kingdom. Our solicitations are, therefore—and we earnestly entreat your lordship to represent them to her Majesty—that she will break off this engagement, and espouse some English nobleman. And we further implore of her to dismiss from her Councils the Imperial Ambassador, M. Simon Renard, by whose instrumentality this match has been contrived, and whose influence we conceive to be prejudicial to the interests of our country."

"You do me wrong, Lord Pembroke," replied Renard; "and I appeal to the lord chancellor, whether, in negotiating this treaty, I have made any demands on the part of my sovereign calculated to detract from the power or authority of yours."

"On the contrary," replied Gardiner, "your Excellency has conceded more than we had any right to expect."

"And more than my brother Ambassadors deemed fitting," rejoined Renard. "But I do not repent what I have done, well knowing how anxious the Emperor Charles the Fifth is to unite his son to so wise, so excellent, and so religious a princess as the Queen of this realm, and that no sacrifice could be too great to insure him her hand."

"I am bound to add that your Excellency has advanced nothing but the truth," acquiesced Gardiner; "and

though, at first, as is well known to Lord Pembroke and others of the Council, I was as averse to the match as he or they could be, I am now its warmest advocate. But I will not prolong the discussion. Her Highness's word is passed to the Prince—the contract signed—the treaty concluded. Your remonstrances, therefore, are too late. And if you will suffer me to point out to you the only course that can with propriety be pursued, I would urge you to offer her Majesty your loyal congratulations on her choice—to prepare to receive her consort in the manner she has directed—and to watch over the interests of your country so carefully, that the evils you dread may never arise."

"If my solemn assurance will satisfy the Earl of Pembroke and the other honorable persons here present," remarked Renard, "I will declare, in the Prince my master's name, that he has not the remotest intention of interfering with the government of this country—of engaging it in any war—or of placing his followers in any office or post of authority."

"Whatever may be the Prince's intentions," rejoined Gardiner, "he is precluded by the treaty from acting upon them. At the same time, it is but right to add, that these terms were not wrung from his Ambassador, but voluntarily proposed by him."

"They will never be adhered to," cried Sir Thomas Wyat, stepping forward, and facing Renard, whom he regarded with a look of defiance.

"Do you dare to question my word, sir?" exclaimed Renard.

"I do," replied Wyat sternly. "And let no Englishman put faith in one of your nation, or he will repent his folly. I am a loyal subject of the Queen, and would shed my heart's blood in her defence. But I am also a lover of my country, and will never surrender her to the domination of Spain!"

"Sir Thomas Wyat," rejoined Gardiner, "you are well known as one of the Queen's bravest soldiers; and it is

well you are so, or your temerity would place you in peril."

"I care not what the consequences are to myself, my lord," replied Wyat, "if the Queen will listen to my warning. It is useless to proceed further with this match. The nation will never suffer it to take place; nor will the Prince be allowed to set foot upon our shores."

"These are bold words, Sir Thomas," observed Gardiner suspiciously. "Whence do you draw your conclusions?"

"From sure premises, my lord," answered Wyat. "The very loyalty entertained by her subjects towards the Queen makes them resolute not to permit her to sacrifice herself. They have not forgotten the harsh treatment experienced by Philip's first wife, Maria of Portugal. Hear me, my lord chancellor, and report what I say to her Highness. If this match is persisted in, a general insurrection will follow."

"This is a mere pretext for some rebellious design, Sir Thomas," replied Gardiner sternly. "Sedition ever masks itself under the garb of loyalty. Take heed, sir. Your actions shall be strictly watched, and if ought occurs confirm my suspicions, I shall deem it my duty to recommend her Majesty to place you in arrest."

"Wyat's rashness will destroy us," whispered De Noailles to Courtenay.

"Before we separate, my lords," observed Renard, "I think it right to make known to you that the Emperor, deeming it inconsistent with the dignity of so mighty a Queen as your sovereign to wed beneath her own rank, is about to resign the crown of Naples and the dukedom of Milan to his son, prior to the auspicious event."

A slight murmur of applause arose from the Council at this announcement.

"You hear that," cried the Earl of Arundel. "Can you longer hesitate to congratulate the Queen on her union?"

The Earl was warmly seconded by Paget and Rochester, but no other voice joined them.

"The sense of the assembly is against it," observed the Earl of Pembroke.

"I am amazed at your conduct, my lords," cried Gardiner angrily. "You deny your sovereign the right freely accorded to the meanest of her subjects—the right to choose for herself a husband. For shame!—for shame! Your sense of justice, if not your loyalty, should prompt you to act differently. The Prince of Spain has been termed a stranger to this country, whereas his august sire is not merely the Queen's cousin, but the oldest ally of the crown. So far from the alliance being disadvantageous, it is highly profitable, insuring, as it does, the emperor's aid against our constant enemies the Scots and the French. Of the truth of this you may judge by the opposition it has met with, overt and secret, from the Ambassador of the King of France. But without enlarging upon the advantages of the union, which must be sufficiently apparent to you all, I shall content myself with stating that it is not your province to dictate to the Queen whom she shall marry, or whom she shall not marry, but humbly to acquiesce in her choice. Her Majesty, in her exceeding goodness, has thought fit to lay before you—a step altogether needless—the conditions of her union. It pains me to say you have received her condescension in a most unbecoming manner. I trust, however, a better feeling has arisen among you, and that you will now enable me to report you, as I desire, to her Highness."

The only assenting voices were those of the three lords constituting the imperial party in the Council.

Having waited for a short time, Gardiner bowed gravely, and dismissed the assemblage.

As he was about to quit the presence-chamber, he perceived Courtenay standing in a pensive attitude in the embrasure of a window. Apparently, the room was entirely deserted, except by the two ushers, who, with

white wands in their hands, were stationed on either side of the door. It suddenly occurred to Gardiner that this would be a favorable opportunity to question the Earl respecting the schemes in which he more than suspected he was a party, and he accordingly advanced towards him.

"You have heard the reception which the announcement of her Majesty's marriage has met with," he said. "I will frankly own to you it would have been far more agreeable to me to have named your lordship to them. And you have to thank yourself that such has not been the case."

"True," replied Courtenay, raising his eyes, and fixing them upon the speaker. "But I have found love more powerful than ambition."

"And do you yet love Elizabeth?" demanded Gardiner, with a slight sneer. "Is it possible that an attachment can endure with your lordship longer than a month?"

"I never loved till I loved her," sighed Courtenay.

"Be that as it may, you must abandon her," returned the chancellor. "The Queen will not consent to your union."

"Your lordship has just observed, in your address to the Council," rejoined Courtenay, "that it is the privilege of all—even of the meanest—to choose in marriage whom they will. Since her Highness would exert this right in her own favor, why deny it to her sister?"

"Because her sister has robbed her of her lover," replied Gardiner. "Strong-minded as she is, Mary is not without some of the weaknesses of her sex. She could not bear to witness the happiness of a rival."

Courtenay smiled.

"I understand your meaning, my lord," pursued Gardiner sternly; "but if you disobey the Queen's injunctions in this particular, you will lose you head, and so will the Princess."

"The Queen's own situation is fraught with more peril than mine," replied Courtenay. "If she persists in her

match with the Prince of Spain, she will lose her crown, and then who shall prevent my wedding Elizabeth?"

Gardiner looked at him as he said this so fixedly, that the Earl involuntarily cast down his eyes.

"Your words and manner, my lord," observed the chancellor, after a pause, "convince me that you are implicated in a conspiracy, known to be forming against the Queen."

"My lord!" cried Courtenay.

"Do not interrupt me," continued Gardiner; "the conduct of the Council to-day, the menaces of Sir Thomas Wyat, your own words, convince me that decided measures must be taken. I shall therefore place you in arrest. And this time, rest assured, care shall be taken that you do not escape."

Courtenay laid his hand upon his sword, and looked uneasily at the door.

"Resistance will be in vain, my lord," pursued Gardiner; "I have but to raise my voice, and the guard will immediately appear."

"You do not mean to execute your threats, my lord?" rejoined Courtenay.

"I have no alternative," returned Gardiner, "unless by revealing to me all you know respecting this conspiracy, you will enable me to crush it. Not to keep you longer in the dark, I will tell you that proofs are already before us of your connection with the plot. The dwarf Xit, employed by M. de Noailles to convey messages to you, and who assisted in your escape, has, under threat of torture, made a full confession. From him we have learnt that a guitar, containing a key to the cipher to be used in a secret correspondence, was sent to Elizabeth by the Ambassador. The instrument has been found in the Princess's possession at Ashbridge, and has furnished a clue to several of your own letters to her, which we have intercepted. Moreover two of the French Ambassador's agents, under the disguise of Huguenot preachers, have been arrested, and have revealed his treasonable designs.

Having thus fairly told you the nature and extent of the evidence against you, I would recommend you to plead guilty, and throw yourself upon the Queen's mercy."

"If you are satisfied with the information you have obtained, my lord," returned Courtenay, "you can require nothing further from me."

"Yes!—the names of your associates," rejoined Gardiner.

"The rack should not induce me to betray them," replied Courtenay.

"But a more persuasive engine may," rejoined the chancellor. "What if I offer you Elizabeth's hand provided you will give up all concerned in this plot?"

"I reject it," replied the Earl, struggling between his sense of duty and passion.

"Then I must call the guard," returned the chancellor.

"Hold!" cried Courtenay, "I would barter my soul to the enemy of mankind to possess Elizabeth. Swear to me she shall be mine, and I will reveal all.

Gardiner gave the required pledge.

"Yet if I confess, I shall sign my own condemnation, and that of the Princess," hesitated Courtenay.

"Not so," rejoined the chancellor. "In the last session of Parliament it was enacted, that those only should suffer death for treason, who had assisted at its commission, either by taking arms themselves, or aiding directly and personally those who *had* taken them Such as have simply known or approved the crime are excepted —and your case is among the latter class. But do not let us tarry here. Come with me to my cabinet, and I will resolve all your scruples."

"And you will insure me the hand of the Princess?" said Courtenay.

"Undoubtedly," answered Gardiner. "Have I not sworn it?"

And they quitted the presence-chamber.

No sooner were they gone, than two persons stepped

from behind the arras where they had remained concealed during the foregoing conversation. They were De Noailles and Sir Thomas Wyat.

"Perfidious villain!" cried the latter, "I breathe more freely since he is gone. I had great difficulty in preventing myself from stabbing him on the spot."

"It would have been a useless waste of blood," replied De Noailles. "It was fortunate that I induced you to listen to their conversation. We must instantly provide for our own safety, and that of our friends. The insurrection must no longer be delayed."

"It shall not be delayed an hour," replied Wyat. "I have six thousand followers in Kent, who only require to see my banner displayed to flock round it. Captain Bret and his company of London trainbands are eagerly expecting our rising. Throckmorton will watch over the proceedings in the city. Vice Admiral Winter, with his squadron of seven sail, now in the river under orders to escort Philip of Spain, will furnish us with ordnance and ammunition; and, if need be, with the crews under his command."

"Nothing can be better," replied De Noailles. "We must get the Duke of Suffolk out of the Tower, and hasten to Lord Guilford Dudley, with whom some plan must be instantly concerted. Sir Peter Carew must start forthwith for Devonshire; Sir James Croft for Wales. Your destination is Kent. If Courtenay had not proved a traitor, we would have placed him on the throne. As it is, my advice is that neither Elizabeth nor Jane should be proclaimed, but Mary Stuart."

"There the policy of France peeps out," replied Wyat. "But I will proclaim none of them. We will compel the Queen to give up this match, and drive the Spaniard from our shores."

"As you will," replied De Noailles hastily. "Do not let us remain longer here, or it may be impossible to quit the fortress."

With this they left the palace, and seeking the Duke of

Suffolk, contrived to mix him up among their attendants, and so to elude the vigilance of the warders. As soon as they were out of the Tower, Sir Thomas Wyat embarked in a wherry, manned by four rowers, and took the direction of Gravesend. De Noailles and the Duke of Suffolk hastened to Sion House, where they found Lord Guilford Dudley seated with Jane and Cholmondeley. On their appearance, Dudley started to his feet and exclaimed, "We are betrayed!"

"We are," replied De Noailles. "Courtenay has played the traitor. But this is of no moment, as his assistance would have been of little avail, and his pretensions to the crown might have interfered with the rights of your consort. Sir Thomas Wyat has set out for Kent. We must collect all the force we can, and retire to some place of concealment till his messengers arrive with intelligence that he is marching towards London. We mean to besiege the Tower, and secure the Queen's person."

"Dudley," cried Jane, "if you have one spark of honor, gratitude, or loyalty left, you will take no part in this insurrection."

"Mary is no longer Queen," replied her husband, bending the knee before her. "To you Jane, belongs that title; and it will be for you to decide whether she shall live or not."

"The battle is not yet won," observed the Duke of Suffolk. "Let us obtain the crown before we pass sentence on those who have usurped it."

"The Lady Jane must accompany us," whispered De Noailles to Dudley. "If she falls into the hands of our enemies, she may be used as a formidable weapon against us."

"My lord," cried Jane, kneeling to the Duke of Suffolk, "if my supplications fail to move my husband, do not you turn a deaf ear to them. Believe me, this plot will totally fail, and conduct us all to the scaffold."

"The Duke cannot retreat if he would, madam," interposed De Noailles. "Courtenay has betrayed us all to

Gardiner, and ere now I doubt not officers are despatched to arrest us."

"Jane, you must come with us," cried Dudley.

"Never," she replied, rising. "I will not stir from this spot. I implore you and my father to remain here likewise, and submit yourselves to the mercy of the Queen."

"And do you think such conduct befitting the son of the great Duke of Northumberland?" replied Dudley. "No, madam, the die is cast. My course is taken. You *must* come with us. There is no time for preparation. M. de Noailles, I place myself entirely in your hands. Let horses be brought round instantly," he added, turning to his esquire.

"They shall be at the gate almost before you can reach it, my lord," returned Cholmondeley. "There are several ready saddled within the stables."

"It is well," replied Dudley.

And the esquire departed.

"Father, dear father," cried Jane, "you will not go? You will not leave me?"

But the Duke averted his gaze from her, and rushed out of the room.

De Noailles made a significant gesture to Dudley, and followed him.

"Jane," cried Dudley, taking her hand, "I entreat—nay command you—to accompany me."

"Dudley," she replied, "I cannot—will not—obey you in this. If I could, I would detain you. But as I cannot, I will take no part in your criminal designs."

"Farewell forever, then," rejoined Dudley, breaking from her. "Since you abandon me in this extremity, and throw off my authority, I shall no longer consider myself bound to you by any ties."

"Stay!" replied Jane. "You overturn all my good resolutions. I am no longer what I was. I cannot part thus."

"I knew it," replied Dudley, straining her to his bosom. "You will go with me?"

"I will," replied Jane "since you will have it so."

"Come, then," cried Dudley, taking her hand and leading her towards the door—"to the throne!"

"No," replied Jane sadly—"to the scaffold!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE INSURRECTION OF SIR THOMAS WYAT.

The party had not quitted Sion House more than an hour, when a band of soldiers, headed by Sir Edward Hastings, master of the horse, and one of the Privy Council, arrived to arrest them. But no trace of their retreat could be discovered; and after an unsuccessful search, Hastings was compelled to return to Gardiner with the tidings that their prey had escaped. Not one of the conspirators charged by Courtenay could be found, and it was evident that they had received timely warning, though from what quarter the chancellor could not divine. At first, his suspicions fell upon the Earl of Devonshire, but the utter impossibility of this being the case speedily made him reject the idea.

A Council was immediately held; at which several resolutions, founded upon the information obtained from Courtenay, were passed. Fresh troops were ordered into the Tower, and active preparations made for its defence, in case of a siege. The chancellor himself deemed it prudent to wear a coat of mail beneath his robes; and quitting his palace, old Winchester House, situated on the Surrey side of the river, a little to the west of St. Saviour's, he took up his abode within the fortress. Mary was also advised to remove thither from Whitehall, and, at the instance of Renard, she reluctantly complied.

On the day after her return to the Tower, the Imperial Ambassadors, D'Egmont, Lalaing, De Courrieres, and De Nigry, were conducted by the Earl of Arundel to St.

John's Chapel, where they found the whole of the Council assembled, and the Queen kneeling before the altar. The sacrament was administered by Gardiner, and high mass performed; after which Mary kneeling with her face to the assemblage, said: "I take God to witness that I have not consented to wed the Prince of Spain from any desire of aggrandizement, or carnal affection; but solely for the honor and profit of my kingdom, and the repose and tranquillity of my subjects. Nor shall my marriage prevent me from keeping inviolably the oath I have made to the crown, on the day of my coronation." Uttered with great earnestness and dignity, these words produced a strong effect upon the hearers. Ratifications of the treaty were then exchanged, and the customary oaths taken on both sides.

This ceremony over, the Queen arose, and glancing at the Council, observed: "I have heard, my lords, that most of you highly disapprove my match with the Prince of Spain; but I feel confident, when you have well considered the matter, you will see cause to alter your opinion. However this may be, I am well assured that your loyalty will remain unchanged, and that I may fully calculate upon your services for the defence and protection of my person, in case the rebellion with which I am threatened should take place."

"Your Highness may rely upon us all," replied the Duke of Norfolk.

And the assurance was reiterated by the whole assemblage.

At this moment an attendant stepped forward, and informed the Queen that a messenger, who had ridden for his life, was arrived from Kent, bringing intelligence of an insurrection in that county.

"Let him approach," replied Mary. "You shall hear, my lords, what danger we have to apprehend. Well, fellow," she continued, as the man was ushered into her presence, "thy news?"

"I am the bearer of ill tidings, your Majesty," replied

the messenger, bending the knee before her. "Sir Thomas Wyat yesterday, by sound of trumpet, published in the market-place at Maidstone a proclamation against your Highness's marriage; exhorting all Englishmen wishing well to their country to join with him and others to defend the realm from the threatened thraldom of Spain."

"Ah! traitor!" exclaimed the Queen. "And how was the proclamation received? Speak out—and fear not."

"With universal acclamations," replied the messenger, "and shouts of 'A Wyat! A Wyat! No Spanish match —no Inquisition!' and such treasonable vociferations. Sir Thomas had fifteen hundred men in arms with him, but before he quitted Maidstone, about five hundred more joined him, and multitudes were flocking to his standard when I left the place."

Scarcely had the messenger concluded his recital, when another was introduced.

"What further news hast thou, good fellow?" demanded the Queen.

"I am come to inform your Highness," replied the man, "that Sir Thomas Wyat and his followers have taken possession of the castle of Rochester, and fortified it as well as the town. Moreover, they have broken down the bridge across the Medway, and stop all passengers, by land or water, taking from them their arms."

"Now, by our Lady!" exclaimed the Queen, "this Wyat is a hardy traitor. But he shall meet with the punishment due to his offences. Your Grace," she added, turning to the Duke of Norfolk, "shall march instantly against him with a sufficient force to dislodge him from his hold. And for your better defence, you shall take with you the trained bands of our good city of London, under the command of Captain Bret."

With this, she quitted the chapel, and returned to the palace.

As soon as he could collect his forces, amounting to

about a thousand men, the Duke of Norfolk, accompanied by Bret and the trained bands, set out on his expedition, and arrived at Stroud the same night, where he made preparations to besiege Rochester Castle at daybreak.

Meantime, the utmost anxiety prevailed within the Tower, and tidings of the issue of the expedition were eagerly looked for. Towards the close of the day, after Norfolk's departure, a messenger arrived, bringing the alarming intelligence that Bret and his band had revolted to Wyat, shouting, "We are all Englishmen!—we are all Englishmen! We will not fight against our countrymen." It was added that the Duke,.who had just planted his cannon against the castle, seeing how matters stood, and being uncertain of the fidelity of the troops remaining with him, had made a hasty retreat, leaving his ammunition and horses in the hands of the enemy.

This intelligence struck terror into the hearts of all who heard it and it was the general impression that the insurgents would be victorious—an opinion considerably strengthened, a few hours afterwards, by the arrival of other messengers, who stated that Wyat had besieged and taken Cowling Castle, the residence of Lord Cobham, and was marching towards London. It was also affirmed that he had been joined by Lord Guilford Dudley, the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Thomas Grey, and others with a considerable force, and that their object was to depose Mary, and replace Jane upon the throne. Rumors of insurrections in other parts of the country as well as in London were added; but these could not be so well authenticated.

On the following day, it being ascertained that the rebels had reached Dartford, Sir Edward Hastings and Sir Thomas Cornwallis were sent to hold a parley with the rebels. The army of the insurgents was stationed at the west of the town, before which their ordnance was planted. Dismounting, the two knights sent forward a herald to Wyat, who was standing with Dudley, Suffolk and Bret, near the outworks; and on learning their busi-

ness, he immediately advanced to meet them. After a haughty salutation on both sides, Sir Edward Hastings spoke.

"Sir Thomas Wyat," he said, "the Queen desires to know why you, who style yourself in your proclamations her true subject, act the part of a traitor in gathering together her liege subjects in arms against her?"

"I am no more a traitor than yourself, Sir Edward Hastings," replied Wyat, "and the reason why I have gathered together the people, is to prevent the realm from being overrun by strangers, which must happen if her Highness's marriage with Philip of Spain takes place."

"No strangers are yet arrived," replied Hastings, "and the mischief you apprehend is yet far off. But if this is your only grievance, are you content to confer on the matter with the Council?"

"I am," replied Wyat; "but I will be trusted rather than trust. I will treat with whomsoever the Queen desires, but in surety of her good faith, I must have delivered to me the custody of the Tower of London, and of her Highness's person. Furthermore, I require the head of Simon Renard, the originator of this tumult."

"Insolent!" cried Hastings. "Rather than your traitorous demands shall be complied with, you and all your rabble rout shall be put to the sword."

With these words, he sprang upon his steed, and accompanied by Cornwallis and his attendants, rode back to the Tower, to declare the ill success of his mission to Mary.

Wyat's successes created the greatest consternation among the Queen's party. Though the Tower was filled with armed men, its inmates did not feel secure, being in constant apprehension of a rising in London. The imperial ambassadors were not less alarmed, as it was generally thought they would be sacrificed to the popular fury. Gardiner counselled them to make good their retreat to Brussels; and they all, with the exception of Simon Renard, who declared he would remain upon his post, decided upon following the advice.

They would not, however, depart without taking leave of Mary, who desired them to recommend her to the Emperor, and to assure him she was under no alarm for her personal safety. Costly presents were offered them, but, under the circumstances, they were declined. The ambassadors quitted the Tower at dead of night, embarking at Traitor's Gate, and were compelled to leave their horses, attendants, and baggage behind them.

In spite of the secrecy of their departure, it was discovered, and an attempt was made to capture them by some watermen, who in all probability would have succeeded, if they had not been driven off by the batteries of the fortress. Fortunately, the fugitives found a fleet of merchantmen, armed with a few guns, ready to sail for Antwerp; in one of which they embarked, and under cover of night, got safely down the river.

On the following morning, news was brought that Wyat was within a few miles of London; and it was added that his appearance before the walls of the fortress would be the signal for the rising of the citizens, that the gates of the city would be thrown open to him, and perhaps those of the Tower itself. Every possible precaution was taken by Sir Henry Bedingfeld. He visited the whole line of ramparts and fortifications, and ascertained that all the men were at their posts, and in readiness in case of a sudden attack. By his directions, the drawbridges on London Bridge were broken down—the craft moored on the Middlesex side of the river—the ferry-boats staved and sunk—and the bridges for fifteen miles up the river destroyed. While this was going on, Gardiner, seriously alarmed by the aspect of things sought the Queen's presence, and endeavored to persuade her to fly to France. But Mary, who, it has been more than once observed, inherited all the lion spirit of her father, and whose courage rose in proportion to the danger by which she was surrounded, at once, and disdainfully, rejected the proposal.

"My people may abandon *me*," she said, "but I will

never abandon *them*. I have no fear of the result of this struggle, being well assured I have plenty of loyal English hearts to serve and defend me. If need be, I will take up arms myself, and try the truth of this quarrel; for I would rather die with those who will stand by me, than yield one jot to such a traitor as Wyat."

"Your Majesty is in the right," replied Renard, who was present on the occasion, "if you fly, all is lost. My counsel to you is to resort to the severest measures. Since Lady Jane Grey has disappeared, and you cannot avenge yourself upon her, let the Princess Elizabeth be brought from Ashbridge to the fortress, and on the appearance of Wyat, have a scaffold erected on the summit of Traitor's Tower, and if the arch-rebel will not withdraw his forces, put her and Courtenay to death in his sight."

"I like not your proposal, sir," replied the Queen, "I have no thirst for Courtenay's blood. Nay, the love I once bore him would prevent my taking his life—and it should only be at the last extremity that I would deal severely with Elizabeth. Neither do I think your counsel politic. Such a course might answer in Spain, but not in England. It would only inflame still more the minds of the seditious, and excite them to a state of ungovernable fury."

"You judge wisely, madam," replied Gardiner. "Besides, I have made myself answerable for the safety of the Earl of Devonshire. The blow that falls upon his head must strike mine also. Since your Majesty, with a resolution worthy of the daughter of your great sire, decides on maintaining your ground against these rebels, I nothing fear for the result. Let the worst come to the worst, we can but die, and we will die fighting in your cause."

"My lord," rejoined the Queen, after a moment's reflection, "bid Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and the whole of the officers and men not required on duty on the ramparts, attend high mass within St. John's Chapel an hour hence. You yourself will officiate with all the prelates and priesthood in the fortress. The service over, I shall repair to

the council-chamber, where it is my purpose to address them."

Gardiner bowed, and retired to execute her commands, and the Queen enjoining Renard's attendance at the chapel, retired to her closet with her dames of honor.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF THE QUEEN'S SPEECH IN THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER; AND OF HER INTERVIEW WITH SIR THOMAS WYAT.

At the appointed time, St. John's Chapel was thronged with armed men; and as the royal train passed along the upper gallery, and glanced down upon them, Mary was inexpressibly struck by the scene. Banners waved from the arched openings of the gallery, and the aisles and nave gleamed with polished steel. For fear of a sudden surprise, the soldiers were ordered to carry their weapons, and this circumstance added materially to the effect of the picture. Around the columns of the southern aisle were grouped the arquebusiers with their guns upon their shoulders; around those of the north stood the pikemen, in their steel caps and corslets; while the whole body of the nave was filled with archers, with their bows at their backs. Immediately in front of the altar stood the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke, the Lords Paget and Rochester; Sir Henry Bedingfeld; Sir Henry Jerningham, master of the horse; Sir Edward Bray, master of the ordnance, all in full armor. On the Queen's appearance all these personages bent the knee before her; and Bedingfeld, in virtue of his office, advancing a step before the others, drew his sword, and vowed he would never yield up the fortress but with life. He then turned to the troops, and repeated his determination to them. And the walls of the sacred structure rang with the shouts of the soldiers.

"You have yet loyal followers enow who will shed their last drop of blood in your defence," he added to Mary.

"I nothing doubt it, dear Sir Henry," she replied, in a voice of deep emotion. "I will share your danger, and, I trust, your triumph."

Solemn mass was then performed by Gardiner, who was attended by Bonner, Tunstal, Feckenham, and other prelates and priests in their full robes. On its conclusion, the Queen gave her hand to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and, followed by the whole assemblage, proceeded to the council-chamber, and took her seat beneath the state canopy.

As soon as the whole party was assembled, silence was commanded, and Mary spoke as follows: "I need not acquaint you that a number of Kentish rebels have seditiously and traitorously gathered together against us and you. Their pretence, as they at first asserted, was to resist a marriage between us and the Prince of Spain. To this pretended grievance, and to the rest of their evil-contrived complaints, you have been made privy. Since then, we have caused certain of our Privy Council to confer with the rebels, and to demand the cause of their continuance in their seditious enterprise; and by their own avowal it appears that our marriage is the least part of their quarrel. For they now, swerving from their first statement, have betrayed the inward treason of their hearts, arrogantly demanding the possession of our person, the keeping of our Tower of London, and not only the placing and displacing of our Council, but also the head of one who is an ambassador at our court, and protected by his office from injury."

Here a murmur of indignation arose among the assemblage.

"Now, loving subjects," continued Mary, "what I am, you right well know. I am your Queen, to whom, at my coronation, when I was wedded to the realm, and to the laws of the realm (the spousal ring whereof I hold on my finger, never as yet left off, nor hereafter to be so), you

promised your allegiance and obedience. And that I am the right and true inheritor of the crown of England, I not only take all Christendom to witness, but also your own acts of parliament confirming my title. My father, as you all know, possessed the regal estate by right of inheritance; and by the same right it descended to me. To him you always showed yourselves faithful subjects, and obeyed and served him as your liege lord and king. And, therefore, I doubt not you will show yourselves equally loyal to me, his daughter."

"God save your Highness!" cried the whole assemblage. "Long live Queen Mary!"

"If you are what I believe you," pursued Mary energetically, "you will not suffer any rebel to usurp the governance of our person, nor to occupy our estate, especially so presumptuous a traitor as this Wyat, who, having abused our subjects to be adherents to his traitorous quarrel, intends, under some plea, to subdue the laws to his will, and to give scope to the rascal and forlorn persons composing his army to make general havoc and spoil of our good city of London."

"Down with Wyat!" cried several voices. "Down with the rebels!"

"Never having been a mother," continued Mary, "I cannot tell how naturally a parent loves her children; but certainly a Queen may as naturally and as tenderly love her subjects as a mother her child. Assure yourselves, therefore, that I, your sovereign lady, do as tenderly love and favor you; and thus loving you, I cannot but think that you as heartily and faithfully love me again. And so, joined together in a knot of love and of concord, I doubt not we shall be able to give these rebels a short and speedy overthrow."

Here she was again interrupted by the most enthusiastic expressions of loyalty and devotion.

"On the word of a Queen I promise you," concluded Mary, "if it shall not appear to the nobility and commons in parliament assembled, that my intended marriage is

for the benefit of the whole realm, I will not only abstain from it, but from any other alliance. Pluck up your hearts, then, and like true men stand fast with your lawful Queen against these rebels, both my enemies and yours, and fear them not, for I fear them nothing at all."

Thundering plaudits followed Mary's oration, which, it was evident, had produced the desired effect upon the assemblage; and if any one entered the council-chamber wavering in his loyalty, he returned confirmed in his attachment to the throne. Mary's intrepid demeanor was sufficient to inspire courage in the most faint-hearted, and her spirit imparted an expression of beauty to her countenance which awakened the warmest admiration among all the beholders.

"You have proved yourself a worthy daughter of your august sire, madam," observed Bedingfeld.

"I *will* prove myself so before I have done, Sir Henry," rejoined Mary, smiling. "I trust myself wholly to you."

"Your majesty may depend upon me," replied the old knight. "And now, with your permission, I will withdraw my forces, and visit the ramparts. After your address no one will forsake his post."

So saying, he departed with the troops, and after making his rounds returned to his lodgings.

Mary then appointed Lord William Howard, in conjunction with the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas White, to the government of the city, and the Earl of Pembroke to the command of the army. These arrangements made, she continued for some time in conference with Gardiner and Renard. Just as she was about to retire, Sir Henry Bedingfeld came to apprise her that Wyat's army had reached Southwark, and had taken up a position at the foot of London Bridge. After mature deliberation, it was resolved that the rebel leader should be invited to an interview with the Queen, and Bedingfeld was entrusted with the mission.

Proceeding to Traitor's Gate, the old knight embarked in a wherry with four soldiers and a herald, and was

rowed towards the hostile party. As he drew near the Surrey side of the water, Wyat's sentinels presented their calivers at him; but as soon as they perceived he was attended by a herald, they allowed him to approach. On learning his errand, Wyat, contrary to the advice of the Duke of Suffolk and Lord Guilford Dudley, determined to accompany him.

"You will fall into some snare," observed Dudley, "and lose the day when you have all but gained it."

"Have no fears," replied Wyat. "We shall conquer without striking a blow. Mary would not have made this proposal to me had she not felt certain of defeat."

"But dare you trust her?" demanded Suffolk.

"Sir Henry Bedingfeld has pledged his word for my safe return, and I know him too well to doubt it. Farewell, my lords. We shall meet again in an hour."

"I much doubt if we shall meet again at all," observed Dudley to the Duke, as Wyat stepped into Bedingfeld's wherry, which was rowed swiftly across the river, and presently disappeared beneath the gloomy arch of Traitor's Gate.

Ushered into the council-chamber, Wyat found Mary seated on a chair of state placed at the head of a row of chairs near a partition dividing the vast apartment, and covered with arras representing various naval engagements. The wooden pillars supporting the roof were decorated with panoplies, and through an opening on the right of the Queen, Wyat perceived a band of armed men, with their leader at their head, cased in steel, and holding a drawn sword in his hand. Noticing these formidable preparations with some uneasiness, he glanced inquiringly at Bedingfeld.

"Fear nothing," observed the old knight. "My head shall answer for yours."

Thus reassured, Wyat advanced more confidently towards the Queen, and when within a few paces of her, paused and drew himself up to his full height. Bedingfeld took up a station on the right of the royal chair, and

supported himself on his huge two-handed sword. On the left stood Gardiner and Renard.

"I have sent for you, traitor and rebel that you are," commenced Mary, "to know why you have thus incited my subjects to take up arms against me?"

"I am neither traitor nor rebel, madam," replied Wyat, "as I have already declared to one of your Council, and I but represent the mass of your subjects, who being averse to your union with the Prince of Spain, since you refuse to listen to their prayers, are determined to make themselves heard."

"Ha! God's death! sir," cried Mary furiously, "do you, or do any of my subjects think they can dispose of me in marriage as they think proper? But this is an idle pretext. Your real object is the subversion of my government, and my dethronement. You desire to place the Princess Elizabeth on the throne—and in default of her, the Lady Jane Grey."

"I desire to uphold your Majesty's authority," replied Wyat, "provided you will comply with my demands."

"*Demands!*" cried Mary, stamping her foot, while her eyes flashed fire. "It is the first time such a term has been used to me, and it shall be the last. In God's name what are your demands? Speak, man."

"These, madam," replied Wyat firmly. "I demand the custody of the Tower, the care of your royal person, the dismissal of your Council, and the head of your false counsellor, Simon Renard."

"Will nothing less content you?" inquired Mary sarcastically.

"Nothing," returned Wyat.

"I pray your Majesty to allow me to punish the insolence of this daring traitor," cried Renard, in extremity of fury.

"Peace, sir," rejoined Mary majestically. "Now hear me in turn, thou traitor Wyat. No man ever dictated terms to my father, and, by his memory! none shall do so to me. At once, and peremptorily, I reject your con-

ditions; and had not Sir Henry Bedingfeld pledged his word for your safety, my guards should have led you from hence to the scaffold. Quit my presence, and as I would rather be merciful than severe, and spare the lives of my subjects than destroy them, if you disperse your host, and submit yourself to my mercy, I will grant you a free pardon. Otherwise nothing shall save you."

"When we next meet, your Majesty may alter your tone," rejoined Wyat; "I take my leave of your Highness."

So saying, he bowed and retired with Sir Henry Bedingfeld.

"Your Majesty will not let him escape?" cried Renard.

"In sooth but I shall, sir," replied Mary; "my word must be kept even with a traitor."

"You are over-scrupulous, madam," rejoined Renard. "there is no faith to be kept with such a villain. Beseech you, let me follow him. His head, displayed to his companions, will disperse them more speedily than your whole army."

"I have already said it must not be," replied Mary.

"Nay then," rejoined Renard, "I will take the responsibility of the act upon myself."

"Disobeyed!" exclaimed Mary authoritatively. "I command you not to leave the presence."

"Your Majesty will repent this mistaken clemency," cried Renard, chafing with fury.

"I shall never repent adhering to my word," returned Mary. "And see here comes our lieutenant. How now, Sir Henry? Is the traitor gone?"

"He is, your Highness," replied Bedingfeld; "and it required all my authority to prevent the infuriated guard from falling upon him, and cutting him in pieces."

"I am glad you were with him," replied Mary; "I would not for the best jewel in my crown that any harm had happened to him. Give me your hand, Sir Henry. I will myself visit the ramparts, and cheer the soldiers with my presence."

"Your Majesty will expose yourself," returned Bedingfeld.

"To whom?" replied Mary; "only to my subjects. They will not dare to assail their Queen. The daughter of your old master, Henry the Eighth, should have no fear."

WEST VIEW OF THE MIDDLE TOWER.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SIEGE OF THE TOWER.

On Wyat's return, it was resolved that, under cover of darkness, the Duke of Suffolk and Lord Guilford Dudley should march with two detachments of men to Deptford, where a squadron of seven sail, commanded by Admiral Winter, together with a number of lesser craft, awaited them. Dudley and his party were then to cross the river in Winter's boats, and proceed to East Smithfield; while Suffolk was to embark his men in the larger vessels, and to sail up the river with the tide. Wyat determined to attempt a passage across London Bridge, and if this could

not be accomplished, to abide the arrival of Winter's squadron.

It was then arranged that the attack should take place two hours before dawn. The fortress was to be assailed simultaneously at three different points, so as to distract the attention of its defenders. To Lord Guilford Dudley was assigned the Brass Mount, and the north-east angle of the ramparts; to the Duke of Suffolk Traitor's Tower, and the southern fortifications; and to Wyat the Middle Tower, and the By-ward Tower—two of the strongest defences of the fortress. If the attack proved successful, the three leaders were to concentrate their forces before the gateway of the Bloody Tower.

When it was sufficiently dark, Suffolk and Dudley placed themselves at the head of their detachments and set out. Though they moved along with the utmost caution, they were heard by the soldiers on the ramparts, who reported their suspicions to Bedingfeld, and precautions were taken accordingly, though it was the opinion of many that the rebels had beat a retreat.

At midnight, Wyat prepared to cross London Bridge. Aware that the drawbridges were cut away—that it was barricaded and strongly defended—he provided himself with planks and ropes, and issuing instructions to his men, set forward. They were allowed to proceed without molestation to the first drawbridge, but here a sharp fire was opened upon them. In spite of this, Wyat succeeded in laying down a plank, and at the head of a dozen men crossed it. Dislodging their opponents, several other planks were laid down, and the passage being rendered secure, the whole party crossed, and carried over their ammunition in safety.

The report of the attack soon reached the city-guard. Drums were beaten, trumpets sounded, and shouts heard in every direction. While this was passing, a well-contested fight took place at the barricades in the centre of the bridge, between their defenders and the insurgents. Having broken down these obstacles, Wyat drove

all before him. Still, another and wider chasm lay between him and the Middlesex shore. In front of it the assailed party made a desperate stand, but their resistance was unavailing. Many were precipitated into the yawning gulf and drowned; while others threw down their arms, and besought mercy.

On the further side of the chasm a formidable array of soldiery opposed the progress of the rebel army, and a piece of ordnance did terrible execution amongst them. Two planks were hewn asunder as soon as they were thrust across the abyss, but the moment the third was laid down Wyat dashed across it, and drove back two men with hatchets in their hands who were about to sever it. He was followed by half-a-dozen soldiers. In this instance his fiery courage had well-nigh proved fatal to him, for no sooner had the small band crossed it, than the plank was hurled into the chasm, and Wyat left with his trifling party to contend against the whole host of his foes. His destruction appeared inevitable, but his self-possession stood him in good stead.

"Fellow-countrymen," he shouted "I am your friend, not your enemy. I would deliver you from thraldom and oppression. You ought rather to aid than oppose me. You are upholding Spain and the Inquisition, while I am fighting for England and liberty."

These few words, vociferated while he made a desperate stand against his opponents, turned the tide of affairs. In vain the royalist leaders shouted, "Down with the rebels!—the Queen! the Queen!" They were answered by deafening cries of "A Wyat! a Wyat! No Philip of Spain—no Popish supremacy—no Inquisition!"

Amid this tumult, the insurgents, who had witnessed with dismay the perilous position of their leader, redoubled their exertions; and placing several planks across the gulf, crossed them, and flew to his assistance. Following up the advantage he had gained, Wyat without difficulty routed his opponents. He then paused to cover the passage of the remainder of his troops and

artillery across the chasm, which was safely accomplished.

At the foot of Fish Street Hill, they were checked by a company of horse under the command of the Earl of Pembroke, and a skirmish took place, in which the royalists were worsted with severe loss, and many prisoners taken, as well as arms and horses. Pembroke, however, escaped and retreated to the Tower, bringing the news of his own defeat and of the successes of the rebels.

The citizens showed little disposition to take part in the struggle. All they were uneasy about was the security of their property; but Wyat, having prohibited his men from plunder or riot, and Captain Bret proclaiming that no mischief should be done, they remained tranquil. In this way the insurgents marched, without further interruption, to Cornhill, where Wyat marshalled his forces, distributed rations of meat and liquors among them, and awaited the appointed time for his attack upon the Tower.

Within the fortress all was consternation. The extraordinary success which had hitherto attended Wyat, wellnigh paralyzed the Queen's party. The Council again urged Mary to escape privately, but she peremptorily refused and forbade the subject to be mentioned again, on pain of her severest displeasure. Some of the more timid then ventured to advise that she should assent to Wyat's terms—that Renard should be given up, and the match with the Prince of Spain abandoned. "I will sooner abandon my crown," rejoined Mary. Her courage never for one instant forsook her, and her spirit and resolution sustained the wavering minds of her adherents.

Long before this, Suffolk and Dudley had reached Deptford. As agreed, the Duke and his detachment embarked on board Winter's squadron, while the others were transported across the river in smaller boats. At Poplar Dudley ordered his men to nail together a number of stout boards, to serve as rafts. These were fastened with ropes to such horses as they could procure, and on

reaching East Smithfield were unharnessed and held in readiness, until the signal of attack should be given. Besides the rafts, two or three wherries had been brought up from the river, and several long scaling-ladders provided.

Dudley's detachment consisted of about a thousand men, archers and arquebusiers, all of whom were well armed and eager for the attack. As yet, all was involved in profound darkness, and so far as they could judge, no suspicion of their presence was entertained by those within the fortress.

Scouts were despatched towards the postern gate—a fortification terminating the city wall, and situated, as has before been stated, at the north side of the moat—and from one of them, who had contrived to scramble along the edge of the fosse, it was ascertained that a detachment of Sir Thomas Wyat's party was creeping stealthily along, with the intention of surprising the postern gate.

It had been Cholmondeley's intention to search for the entrance to the secret communication through which he had passed beneath the moat, but the almost certainty that it would be stopped, induced him to abandon the idea.

All at once, a blaze of light was seen at the south of the fortress, in the direction of the river. It was followed by the roar of artillery, and the sharper discharge of fire-arms, accompanied by the beating of drums, the loud braying of trumpets, the clashing of swords, and other martial sounds.

On hearing this, Dudley gave the signal of assault. Dashing down the sides of the moat, his men launched their rafts on the water, and pushed them across with long poles. The noise they made betrayed them to the sentinels. The alarm was instantly given, and a tremendous fire opened upon them from the batteries and case-mate of the Brass Mount, as well as from the eastern and western line of ramparts.

The Brass Mount has already been described as the largest bastion of the Tower, standing at the north-east angle of the fortress, and its walls were, and still are, of such immense thickness, and it was so well fortified, that it was regarded as impregnable. Notwithstanding this impression, it formed the main object of the present attack. Amid a slaughterous fire from the besieged, Dudley embarked with Cholmondeley, who carried his standard, in a small skiff, and waving his sword above his head pointed to the Brass Mount, and urged his men to the assault. They wanted no encouragement; but in some degree protected by the showers of arrows discharged by the archers stationed on the sides of the moat, and the constant fire of the arquebusiers, succeeded in placing two ladders against that part of the eastern ramparts immediately adjoining the bastion.

These were instantly covered with men, who mounted sword in hand, but were attacked and hurled backwards by the besieged. Another ladder was soon planted against the Brass Mount, while two more were reared against the northern ramparts opposite the postern gate, which had been stormed and taken by Wyat's party, several of whom were descending the banks of the moat, and firing upon the fortress, assisted by three culverins placed in a temporary battery composed of large baskets filled with sand.

All this had not been executed without severe loss on the part of the insurgents. Several of the rafts were swamped, and their occupants, embarrassed by the weight of their arms, drowned. One of the ladders planted against the northern battlements was hurled backwards with its living load; and such was the vigor and determination of the besieged, that none of the assailants could set a foot on the ramparts.

Considerable execution, however, was done by the showers of arrows from archers, as well as by the discharges of the arquebusiers. But success did not, as yet, declare itself for either side. Constantly repulsed, the

insurgents still resolutely returned to the charge; and though numbers fell from the ladders, other were instantly found to take their place.

Seeing how matters stood, and aware that some desperate effort must be made, Dudley, who had hitherto watched the progress of the fight from the moat, exposing himself to the full fire of the batteries, resolved to ascend the ladder placed against the Brass Mount. Cholmondeley agreed to follow him, and amid the cheers of the assailants and the unrelaxing fire of the besieged, the boat was run in to the side of the bastion.

At this juncture a loud explosion, succeeded by a tremendous shout, was heard at the south side of the fortress. For a brief space both royalists and insurgents ceased fighting; and taking advantage of the pause, Dudley swiftly mounted the ladder, and reaching the summit, shouted, "God save Queen Jane!"

"God save Queen Jane!" echoed Cholmondeley, who was close behind him. "God save Queen Jane!" he repeated, waving the banner.

The cry was reiterated from below, and the firing recommenced more furiously than ever.

It was rumored among Dudley's men, and the report stimulated their ardor, that the Duke of Suffolk had taken St. Thomas's Tower. This, however, was not the case. After the embarkation of the troops as before related, the squadron under the command of Admiral Winter, accompanied by a number of galleys and wherries, made its way slowly to the Tower. Owing to the necessary delay, the tide had turned, and the larger vessels had to be towed up the river by the smaller craft.

On their arrival they were immediately perceived by the sentinels, who opened a fire upon them, which was instantly returned. This was the commencement of the siege, and served as the signal to Dudley, and likewise to Wyat, of whose movements it will be necessary to speak hereafter.

Before the squadron came up the Duke of Suffolk em-

barked in a small galley, and accompanied by several wherries filled with soldiers, contrived, by keeping close under the wall of the wharf, to effect a landing, unperceived, at the stairs. Taken by surprise, the guard fell an easy prey to their assailants, who seizing the cannon placed there, turned them against the fortress.

While this was passing several boats landed their crews at the eastern end of the wharf, and many others speeded towards it from all quarters. In a short time it was crowded by the insurgents, and notwithstanding the tremendous fire kept up against them from the whole line of battlements—from Traitor's Tower—and from all the fortifications within shot, they resolutely maintained their ground.

Directing the attack in person, and exposing himself to every danger, the Duke of Suffolk displayed the utmost coolness and courage. The fight raged furiously on both sides. Several boats, and one of the larger vessels, were sunk by the guns of the batteries, and the ranks of the insurgents were greatly thinned. Still there was no symptom of irresolution exhibited, nor did they relax for a moment in their efforts.

Scaling-ladders were placed against the walls of Traitor's Tower, and crowded with climbers, while a gun-boat entered the dark arch beneath it, and its crew commenced battering with axes, halberds, and poles, against the portcullis and water-gate. Another party had taken possession of the buildings opposite the By-ward Tower, and were trying to reach the drawbridge, which, it is almost needless to say, was raised. Added to these, a strong body of Essex men, having congregated at Lime-house, approached the fortress by St. Catherine's, and the lane leading to the Flemish church, and were striving to force the Iron Gate and the eastern outlet of the wharf.

At this juncture an occurrence took place which, while it disheartened the besieged, tended greatly to animate the assailing party. At the south-west corner of the

wharf stood a row of small habitations separating it from Petty Wales. One of these was presently observed to be on fire, and the flames rapidly spread to the others. Shortly afterwards a tremendous explosion took place. A building was blown up, and the fiery fragments tossed into the river and moat; while across the blazing ruins, with loud shouts, rushed a party of men from the troops under Sir Thomas Wyat.

This was the explosion that reached the ears of Dudley and his band. Rushing to the assistance of their friends, the new-comers seemed determined to carry all before them, and such was the effect of their sudden appearance, that the besieged for a moment gave way, and a small body of the insurgents gained a footing on the roof of Traitor's Tower. But the next moment the royalists rallied, drove off their assailants, and the fight continued as obstinately as before.

It was a sublime but terrific spectacle, and one not easily effaced from the remembrance of those who beheld it. The ruddy light cast upon the water by the burning houses, and serving to reveal the tall vessels; the armed boats; the sinking craft and struggling figures with which it was covered; the towers and battlements of the fortress pouring forth fire and smoke; the massive pile of the ancient citadel, which added its thunder to the general din; the throng of warlike figures engaged in active strife on the wharf, or against Traitor's Tower, constituted a scene of intense, though fearful interest; nor did the roar of the cannon, the clash of arms, the shouts and cheers of the combatants, and the groans of the wounded, detract from its effect.

There was yet another scene which, though unwitnessed except by those actually concerned in it, equalled, if not surpassed, it in gloomy power. This was a conflict under St. Thomas's Tower. It has been already mentioned that a party, manning a gunboat, had penetrated beneath the arch leading to Traitor's Tower, where they endeavored, with such weapons as they possessed, to effect an en-

trance. While they were thus employed, the portcullis was suddenly raised, and the water-gate opened; and the men, supposing their own party had gained possession of the fortification above them, dashed forward.

They were speedily undeceived. Before they reached the steps, a number of armed figures, some of whom bore torches, appeared, while a thundering splash behind told that the portcullis had been let down, so as to cut off their retreat. Nothing remained but to sell their lives as dearly as they could. Quarter was neither asked nor granted. Some leaped overboard, and tried, sword in hand, to force a way up the steps; others prepared to follow them; and the gunner discharged a falconet planted at the prow of the boat, occasioning fearful havoc among their opponents.

But this availed nothing. They were driven back, and their assailants pursuing them into the recesses of the arch, put them to death. The light of the few torches that illumined the scene, fell upon figures fearfully struggling, while the arches rang with the reports of musketry, groans, and curses. In a short time all was still and dark as heretofore. But when the water-gate was afterwards opened, fourteen mangled corpses floated out to the Thames.

While the siege was thus vigorously carried on, on the north and south, the western side of the fortress was not neglected. Remaining at Cornhill for some hours, Wyat divided his forces into two detachments, and committed one to Captain Bret, whom he directed to proceed to the upper part of Tower Hill, along Lombard Street, Fenchurch Street, and Tower Street, and to place his men within the church-yard of All-Hallows Barking, and at the rear of the scaffold on Tower Hill; while with the other he himself marched down Gracechurch Street, along Thames Street, taking up a position before the Bulwark Gate.

As soon as he had reached this point, and arranged his men, he rode off to Bret, and ordered a party, commanded

by Captain Cobham, to attack the postern-gate, as before related. Bret was to hold himself in readiness to march down to the Bulwark Gate, or to attack the Leg Mount, a bastion at the north-west angle of the fortress, corresponding (though of somewhat smaller size) with the Brass Mount, as he should receive instructions.

Having issued these directions, Wyat rode back to his troops—he was now mounted, as were several of his officers, on the steeds captured in the recent skirmish with the Earl of Pembroke—and commanded them to remain perfectly quiet till Admiral Winter's squadron should arrive off the Tower. His injunctions were strictly obeyed, and such perfect silence was observed, that though his men were drawn up within a few yards of the fortress, they were not discovered by the sentinels.

On the arrival of the squadron, Wyat immediately commenced an attack upon the Bulwark Gate—one of the weakest outworks of the fortress—and while directing his engines against it, some half-dozen wooden houses adjoining it on the side of the moat were fired by his men; and the flames quickly extending to the buildings immediately contiguous to the Bulwark Gate, that defence was at once surrendered.

The first point gained, Wyat despatched a messenger to Bret ordering him to join him instantly; and while a handful of his men, rushing round the semicircular wall heretofore described as protecting the lesser moat, attacked the embattled gateway fronting the Lion's Tower, with the intention of joining Suffolk's party on the wharf, he directed his main force against the Lion's Gate. This fortification was stoutly defended, and the insurgents were twice repulsed before they could bring their engines to bear against it.

Bret and his party having arrived, such an irresistible attack was made upon the gate, that in a short time it was carried. With loud shouts, the insurgents drove the royalists before them along the narrow bridge facing the Lion's Tower, and leading to the Middle Tower, putting

some to the sword, and throwing others over the walls into the moat.

The movement was so expeditious, and the rout so unexpected, that the portcullis of the Middle Tower, which was kept up to allow the flying men to pass through it, could not be lowered, and hastily directing those around him to prop it up with a piece of timber, Wyat continued the pursuit to the By-ward Tower.

Hitherto, complete success had attended his efforts; and if he had passed the fortification he was approaching, in all probability he would have been master of the Tower. Nothing doubting this, he urged his men onwards. On his left rode Bret, and behind them, at a short distance, came Captain Knevet, and two other leaders, likewise on horseback.

As they arrived within a few paces of the By-ward Tower, three tremendous personages issued from it, and opposed their further progress. They were equipped in corslets of polished steel and morions; and two of them were armed with bucklers and enormous maces, while the third wielded a partizan of equal size. These, it is almost needless to state, were the three giants. The bearer of the partizan was Gog. Behind them came their diminutive attendant, who, it appeared, had been released from his thraldom, particulars of which, and of his adventures subsequent to his meeting with Cicely in the cell beneath the Salt Tower, will be related at a more convenient opportunity.

Like his gigantic companions, Xit was fully armed, in a steel corslet, cuisses, and gauntlets. His head was sheltered by a helmet, shaded by an immense plume of feathers, which, being considerably too large for him, almost eclipsed his features. He was furthermore provided with a sword almost as long as himself, and a buckler.

Taking care to keep under the shelter of the giants, Xit strutted about, and brandishing his sword in a valiant manner, shouted, or rather screamed—

"Upon them, Og:—attack them, Gog!—why do you

stand still, Magog? Let me pass, and I will show you how you should demean yourselves in the fight!"

At the sight of the giants, the flying royalists rallied, and a fierce but ineffectual struggle took place. During it Bret was dismounted and thrown into the moat. Urged by their leader, the insurgents pressed furiously forward. But the giants presented an impassable barrier. Og plied his mace with as much zeal as he did the clubs when he enacted the part of the Tower at Courtenay's masque, and with far more terrible effect. All avoided the sweep of his arm.

Not content with dealing blows, he dashed among the retreating foe, and hurled some dozen of them into the moat. His prowess excited universal terror and astonishment. Nor was Gog much behind him. Wherever his partizan descended, a foe fell beneath its weight; and as he was incessantly whirling it over his head, and bringing it down, a space was speedily cleared before him.

Seeing the havoc occasioned by the gigantic brethren, and finding that they completely checked his further advance, Wyat struck spurs into his charger, and dashing upon Magog, tried to hew him down. If the married giant had not caught the blow aimed at him upon his shield, Dame Placida had been made a widow for the second time. Again plunging the spurs rowel-deep into his horse's flanks, Wyat would have ridden over his gigantic antagonist, if the latter, perceiving his intention, had not raised his mace, and with one tremendous blow smashed the skull of the noble animal.

"Yield you, Sir Thomas Wyat," cried Magog, rushing up to the knight, who was borne to the ground with his slaughtered charger; "you are my prisoner."

"Back, caitiff!" cried Wyat, disengaging himself and attacking the giant; "I will never yield with life."

Wyat, however, would have been speedily captured by the giant, if Knevet, seeing his perilous situation, had not pressed forward with several others to his assistance, and rescued him. This accident, however, enabled the retreat-

ing party to pass beneath the archway of the By-ward Tower, the portcullis of which was instantly lowered.

Meanwhile, a body of the insurgents having taken possession of the Middle Tower, had planted themselves at the various loopholes and on the roof, and kept up a constant fire on the soldiers stationed on the summit of the By-ward Tower.

Among those who contrived to distinguish themselves in the action was Xit. Finding his position one of more danger than he had anticipated, he scrambled upon the wall on the right of the By-ward Tower, where, being out of the rush, he could defy at his ease those who were swimming in the moat.

While he was in this situation, Bret, who, it has been mentioned, was thrown into the moat, swam to the wall, and endeavored to ascend it. Xit immediately attacked him, and adopting the language of Magog to Wyat, threatened to throw him back again if he did not yield.

"I do yield," replied Bret.

"Your name and rank?" demanded the dwarf in an authoritative tone.

"Alexander Bret, captain of the London trained-bands, second in command to Sir Thomas Wyat," replied the other.

"Here, Magog—Gog—Og—help!" shouted Xit; "I have taken a prisoner. It is Captain Bret, one of the rebel leaders—help him out of the moat, and let us carry him before the Queen!" I am certain to be knighted for my valor. Mind, *I* have taken him. He has yielded to me. No one else has had a hand in his capture."

Thus exhorted, Magog pulled Bret out of the moat. As soon as he ascertained who he was, he bore him in his arms towards the By-ward Tower—Xit keeping near them all the time, screaming, "He is *my* prisoner. You have nothing to do with it. I shall certainly be knighted."

At Magog's command, the portcullis was partially raised, and Xit and Bret thrust under it, while the two other giants repelled the assailants.

SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF THE JEWEL TOWER.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW QUEEN MARY COMPORTED HERSELF DURING THE SIEGE; HOW LORD GUILFORD DUDLEY WAS CAPTURED; AND HOW SIR THOMAS WYAT AND THE DUKE OF SUFFOLK WERE ROUTED.

THROUGHOUT the whole of the siege, the Queen maintained her accustomed firmness; and to her indomitable courage, and the effect produced by it upon her followers, the successful issue of the conflict to the royalist party is

mainly to be attributed. Startled from her slumbers by the roar of the artillery, Mary arose, and hastily arraying herself, quitted the palace with Gardiner, Renard, and a few other attendants, who had flown to her on the first rumor of the attack, and repaired to the lieutenant's lodgings, where she found Sir Henry Bedingfeld in the entrance-hall, surrounded by armed men, busied in giving them instructions, and despatching messages to the officers in command of the different fortifications.

At the Queen's appearance, the old knight would have flung himself at her feet, but she motioned him not to heed her, and contented herself with saying, as each messenger departed: "Tell my soldiers that I will share their danger. I will visit every fortification in turn, and I doubt not I shall find its defenders at their posts. No courageous action shall pass unrequited; and as I will severely punish these rebels, so I will reward those who signalize themselves in their defeat. Bid them fight for their Queen—for the daughter of the Eighth Henry, whose august spirit is abroad to watch over and direct them. He who brings me Wyat's head shall receive knighthood at my hands, together with the traitor's forfeited estates. Let this be proclaimed. And now fight—and valiantly—for you fight for the truth."

Charged with animating addresses like these, the soldiers hurried to their various leaders. The consequence may be easily imagined. Aware that they were under the immediate eye of their sovereign, and anticipating her coming each moment, the men, eager to distinguish themselves, fought with the utmost ardor; and such was the loyalty awakened by Mary's energy and spirit, that even those secretly inclined towards the opposite party, of whom there were not a few, did not dare to avow their real sentiments.

While Mary remained in the lieutenant's lodgings, word was brought that the fortress was attacked on all sides, and the thunder of the ordnance now resounding from the whole line of ramparts, and answered by the

guns of the besiegers, confirmed the statement. As she heard these tidings, and listened to the fearful tumult without, her whole countenance underwent a change; and those who remembered her kingly sire recognized his most terrible expression, and felt the same awe they had formerly experienced in his presence.

"Oh, that I had been born a man," she cried; "that with my own hand I might punish these traitors! But they shall find, though they have a woman to deal with, they have no feeble and faint-hearted antagonist. I cannot wield a sword, but I will stand by those who can. Sir Henry Bedingfeld, take these orders from me, and they are final. Let the siege go how it may, I will make no terms with the rebels, nor hold further parley with them. Show them no quarter—exterminate them utterly. I no longer regard them as subjects—children; but as aliens—foes. Deal with them as such. And look you yield not this fortress—for, by God's grace, *I* never will yield it! Where is your own post, Sir Henry?"

"At the By-ward Tower, your Highness," replied Bedingfeld. "The traitor Wyat directs the attack in that quarter, and he is most to be feared of all our opponents. I will not quit the fortification with my life. But who shall succeed me, if I fall?"

"The Queen," replied Mary. "But you will *not* fall, good Bedingfeld. You are appointed by Heaven to be my preserver. Go to your post, and keep it in my name. Go, and fight for your royal mistress, and for the holy Catholic faith which we both of us profess, and which these rebels—these heretics, would overthrow. Go, and the Virgin prosper you, and strengthen your arm."

"I obey your Majesty," replied Bedingfeld; "and yet I cannot but feel that my place is by your side."

"Ah! do you loiter, sir?" cried Mary fiercely. "You have tarried here too long already. Do you not hear yon loud-voiced cannon summon you hence? Are you deaf to those cries? To your post, sir—and quit it not for your head. Stay!" she added, as the knight was about

to obey her. "I meant not this. I have been over-hasty. But you will bear with me Go. I have no fears—and have much to do. Success be with you. We meet again as victors, or we meet no more."

"We shall meet ere daybreak," replied the knight. And quitting the presence, he hurried to the By-ward Tower.

"In case fate declares itself against your Highness, and the insurgents win the fortress," observed Renard, "I can convey you beyond their reach. I am acquainted with a subterranean passage communicating with the farther side of the moat, and have stationed a trusty guard at its entrance."

"In the event your Excellency anticipates," returned Mary sternly, "but which, I am assured will never occur, I will not fly. While one stone of that citadel stands upon another it shall never be surrendered, and while life remains to her, Mary of England will never desert it. In your next despatch to the Prince your master, tell him his proposed consort proved herself worthy —in resolution, at least—of the alliance."

"I will report your intrepid conduct to the Prince," replied Renard. "But I would, for his sake, if not for your own, gracious madam, that you would not further expose yourself."

"To the ramparts!" cried Mary, disregarding him. "Let those follow me who are not afraid to face these traitors."

Quitting the entrance hall, she mounted a broad staircase of carved oak, and traversing a long gallery, entered a passage leading to the Bell Tower—a fortification already described as standing on the west of the lieutenant's lodgings, and connected with them. The room to which the passage brought her, situated on the upper story, and now used as part of the domestic offices of the governor, was crowded with soldiers, busily employed in active defensive preparations. Some were discharging their calivers through the loopholes at the besiegers,

while others were carrying ammunition to the roof of the building.

Addressing a few words of encouragement to them, and crossing the room, Mary commanded an officer to conduct her to the walls. Seeing from her manner that remonstrance would be useless, the officer obeyed. As she emerged from the low arched doorway opening upon the ballium wall, the range of wooden houses on the opposite side of the moat burst into flames, and the light of the conflagration, while it revealed the number of her enemies and their plan of attack, rendered her situation infinitely more perilous, inasmuch as it betrayed her to general observation. Directed by the shouts, the besiegers speedily discovered the occasion of the clamor; and though Sir Thomas Wyat, who was engaged at the moment in personally directing the assault on the Bulwark Gate, commanded his men to cease firing in that quarter, his injunctions were wholly disregarded, and several shot struck the battlements close to the Queen. Seriously alarmed, Gardiner earnestly entreated her to retire, but she peremptorily refused, and continued her course as slowly as if no danger beset her—ever and anon pausing to watch the movements of the besiegers, or to encourage and direct her own men. Before she reached the Beauchamp Tower, the Bulwark Gate was carried, and the triumphant shouts of the insurgents drew from her an exclamation of bitter anger.

"It is but a small advantage gained, your Highness," remarked the officer; "they will be speedily repulsed."

"Small as it is, sir," rejoined the Queen, "I would rather have lost the richest jewel from my crown than they had gained so much. Look! they are gathering together before the Lions' Gate. They are thundering against it with sledgehammers, battering-rams, and other engines. I can hear the din of their blows above all this tumult. And see! other troops are advancing to their aid. By their banners and white coats, I know they are the London trained-bands, headed by Bret, Heaven con-

found the traitor! He who will bring him to me dead or alive shall have whatever he asks. Ah, God's death! they have forced the Lions' Gate—they drive all before them. Recreants! why do you not dispute it inch by inch, and you may regain what you have lost? Confusion! Wyat and his rebel band press onward, and the others fly. They pass through the Middle Tower. Ah! that shout, those fearful cries! They put my faithful subjects to the sword. They are in possession of the Middle Tower, and direct its guns on the By-ward Tower. Wyat and his band are on the bridge. They press forward, the others retreat. Retreat! ah, caitiffs, cowards that you are, you *must* fight now, if you have a spark of loyalty left. They fly. They have neither loyalty nor valor. Where is Bedingfeld?—where is my lieutenant? why does he not sally forth upon them? If I were there, I would myself lead the attack."

"Your Majesty's desires are fulfilled," remarked the officer; "a sally is made by the party from the gate—the rebels are checked."

"I see it!" exclaimed the Queen joyfully; "but what valiant men are they who thus turn the tide? Ah! I know them now, they are my famous giants—my loyal warders. Look how the rebel ranks are cleared by the sweep of their mighty arms. Brave yeomen! you have fought as no belted knights have hithterto fought, and have proved the truth of your royal descent. Ah! Wyat is down. Slay him! spare him not, brave giant! his lands, his title are yours. Heaven's curse upon him, the traitor has escaped! I can bear this no longer," she added, turning to her conductor. "Lead on; I would see what they are doing elsewhere."

The command was obeyed, but the officer had not proceeded many yards when a shot struck him, and he fell mortally wounded at tbe Queen's feet.

"I fear you are hurt, sir," said Mary anxiously.

"To death, madam," gasped the officer. "I should not care to die, had I lived to see you victorious. When all

others were clamoring for the usurper Jane, my voice was raised for you, my rightful Queen; and now my last shout shall be for you."

"Your name?" demanded Mary, bending over him.

"Gilbert," replied the officer; "I am the grandson of Gunnora Braose."

"Live, Gilbert," rejoined Mary—"live for my sake!"

Raising himself upon one arm, with a dying effort Gilbert waved his sword over his head, and cried, "God save Queen Mary, and confusion to her enemies?" And with these words he fell backwards, and instantly expired. The Queen gazed for a moment wistfully at the body.

"How is it," she mused, as she suffered herself to be led onward by Renard, "that, when hundreds of my subjects are perishing around me, this man's death should affect me so strongly?—I know not. Yet, so it is."

Her attention, however, was speedily attracted to other matters. Passing through the Beauchamp Tower, she proceeded to the next fortification.

The main attacks of the besiegers, as has been previously stated, were directed against the Brass Mount, St. Thomas's Tower, and the By-ward Tower;—the western and north-western ramparts, including the Leg Mount, a large bastion corresponding with the Brass Mount, being comparatively unmolested. Taking up a position on the roof of the Devilin Tower, which flanked the north-west angle of the ballium wall, Mary commanded two sides of the fortress, and the view on either hand was terrific and sublime. On the left, the blazing habitations, which being of highly combustible material were now in a great measure consumed, cast a red and lurid glare on the moat, lighting up the ramparts, the fortifications behind them, and those on the bridge—two of which, she was aware, were in the possession of the besiegers. In this quarter the firing had ceased, and it seemed that both parties had by mutual consent suspended hostilities, to renew them in a short time with greater animosity than ever. On the right, however, the assault continued with unabated

fury. A constant fire was kept up from the temporary batteries placed before the postern gate; clouds of arrows whizzed through the air, shot by the archers stationed on the banks of the moat; and another ladder having been placed against the ramparts, several of the scaling party had obtained a footing, and were engaged hand to hand with the besieged. Ever and anon, amid this tumultuous roar was heard a loud splash, proclaiming that some miserable wretch had been hurled into the moat.

After contemplating the spectacle for some time in silence, Mary proceeded to the Flint Tower, a fortification about ninety feet nearer the scene of strife. Here the alarming intelligence was brought her that Lord Guilford Dudley was in possession of the Brass Mount, and that other advantages had been gained by the insurgents in that quarter. The fight raged so fiercely, it was added, that it would be tempting Providence in her Majesty to proceed further. Yielding, at length, to the solicitations of her attendants, Mary descended from the walls, and shaped her course towards the White Tower; while Renard, by her command, hastened to the Martin Tower (now the Jewel Tower) to ascertain how matters stood. His first step was to ascend the roof of this structure, which, standing immediately behind the Brass Mount, completely overlooked it.

It must be borne in mind that the Tower is surrounded by a double line of defences, and that the ballium wall and its fortifications are much loftier than the outer ramparts. Renard found the roof of the Martin Tower thronged with soldiers, who were bringing their guns to bear upon the present possessors of the Brass Mount. They were assisted in their efforts to dislodge them by the occupants of the Brick Tower and the Constable Tower; and notwithstanding the advantage gained by the insurgents, they sustained severe loss from the constant fire directed against them. Renard's glance sought out Lord Guilford Dudley; and after a few moments' search, guided by the shouts, he perceived him with Cholmonde-

ley driving a party of royalists before him down the steps leading to the eastern ramparts. Here he was concealed from view, and protected by the roofs of a range of habitations from the guns on the ballium wall.

A few moments afterwards, intelligence was conveyed by the soldiers on the Broad Arrow Tower to those on the Constable Tower, and thence from fortification to fortification that Dudley, having broken into one of the houses covering the ramparts, was descending with his forces into the eastern ward.

Renard saw that not a moment was to be lost Ordering the soldiers not to relax their fire for an instant, he put himself at the head of a body of men, and hurrying down a spiral stone staircase, which brought him to a subterranean chamber, unlocked a door in it, and traversing with lightning swiftness a long narrow passage, speedily reached another vaulted room. At first no outlet was perceptible; but snatching a torch from one of his band, Renard touched a knob of iron in the wall, and a stone dropping from its place discovered a flight of steps, up which they mounted. These brought them to a wider passage, terminated by a strong door clamped with iron, and forming a small sallyport opening upon the eastern ward, a little lower down than Lord Guilford Dudley and his party had gained admittance to it. Commanding his men to obey his injunctions implicitly, Renard flung open the sallyport, and dashed through it at their head.

Dudley was pressing forward in the direction of the Iron Gate when Renard appeared. Both parties were pretty equally matched in point of number, though neither leader could boast more than twenty followers. Still, multitudes were hastening to them from every quarter. A detachment of royalists were issuing from a portal near the Salt Tower; while a host of insurgents were breaking through the house lately forced by Lord Guilford Dudley, and hurrying to his assistance. In a few seconds, the opposing parties met. By the light of the torches, Dudley

recognized Renard; and uttering a shout of exultation, advanced to the attack.

As soon as it was known to the insurgents that the abhorred Spanish Ambassador was before them, with one accord they turned their weapons against him, and if their leader had not interposed, would have inevitably slain him.

"Leave him to me," cried Dudley, "and I will deliver my country from this detested traitor. Fellow-soldiers," he added, addressing Renard's companions, "will you fight for Spain, for the Inquisition, for the idolatries of Rome, when swords are drawn for your country—and for the Reformed religion? We are come to free you from the yoke under which you labor. Join us, and fight for your liberties, your laws—for the Gospel, and for Queen Jane."

"Ay, fight for Jane, and the Gospel!" shouted Cholmondeley. "Down with Renard and the See of Rome. No Spanish match!—no Inquisition!"

"Who are you fighting for? Who is your leader?" continued Dudley;—"a base Spanish traitor. Who are you fighting against?—Englishmen, your friends, your countrymen, your brothers—members of the same faith, of the same family."

This last appeal proved effectual. Most of the royalists went over to the insurgents, shouting, "No Spanish match!—no Inquisition! Down with Renard!"

"Ay, down with Renard!" cried Dudley. "I will no longer oppose your just vengeance. Slay him, and we will fix his head upon a spear. It will serve to strike terror into our enemies."

Even in this extremity, Renard's constitutional bravery did not desert him; and, quickly retreating, he placed his back against the wall. The few faithful followers who stood by him, endeavored to defend him, but they were soon slain, and he could only oppose his single sword against the array of partisans and pikes raised against him. His destruction appeared inevitable, and he had already given himself up for lost, when a rescue arrived.

The detachment of soldiers, headed by Sir Thomas Brydges, already described as issuing from the gate near the Salt Tower, seeing a skirmish taking place, hurried forward, and reached the scene of strife just in time to save the Ambassador, whose assailants were compelled to quit him to wield their weapons in their own defence. Thus set free, Renard sprang like a tiger upon his foes, and, aided by the new-comers, occasioned fearful havoc among them. But his deadliest fury was directed against those who had deserted him, and he spared none of them whom he could reach with his sword.

Lord Guilford Dudley and his esquire performed prodigies of valor. The former made many efforts to reach Renard, but, such was the confusion around him, that he was constantly foiled in his purpose. At length, seeing it was in vain to contend against such superior force, and that his men would be speedily cut in pieces, and himself captured, he gave the word to retreat, and fled towards the north-east angle of the ward. The royalists started after them; but such was the speed at which the fugitives ran, that they could not overtake them. A few stragglers ineffectually attempted to check their progress, and the soldiers on the walls above did not dare to fire upon them, for fear of injuring their own party. In this way they passed the Martin Tower, and were approaching the Brick Tower, when a large detachment of soldiers were seen advancing towards them.

"Long live Queen Jane!" shouted Dudley and his companions, vainly hoping they were friends.

"Long live Queen Mary, and death to the rebels!" responded the others.

At the cry, Dudley and his little band halted. They were hemmed in on all sides, without the possibility of escape; and the royalists on the fortifications above being now able to mark them, opened a devastating fire upon them. By this time, Renard and his party had turned the angle of the wall, and the voice of the Ambas-

sador was heard crying—"Cut them in pieces! Spare no one but their leader. Take him alive."

Hearing the shout, Dudley observed to Cholmondeley —"You have ever been my faithful esquire, and I claim one last service from you. If I am in danger of being taken, slay me. I will not survive defeat."

"Nay, my lord, live," cried Cholmondeley. "Wyat or the Duke of Suffolk may be victorious, and deliver you."

"No," replied Dudley, "I will not run the risk of being placed again in Mary's power. Obey my last injunctions. Should you escape, fly to Jane. You know where to find her. Bid her embark instantly for France, and say her husband with his last breath blessed her."

At this moment, he was interrupted by Cholmondeley, who pointed out an open door in the ramparts opposite them. Eagerly availing himself of the chance, Dudley called to his men to follow him, and dashed through it, uncertain whither it led, but determined to sell his life dearly. The doorway admitted them into a low vaulted chamber, in which were two or three soldiers and a stand of arms and ammunition. The men fled at their approach along a dark, narrow passage, and endeavored to fasten an inner door, but the others were too close upon them to permit it. As Dudley and his band advanced, they found themselves at the foot of a short flight of steps, and rushing up them, entered a semicircular passage, about six feet wide, with a vaulted roof, and deep embrasures in the walls, in which cannon were planted.

It was, in fact, the casemate of the Brass Mount. By the side of the cannon stood the gunners, and the passage was filled with smoke. Alarmed by the cries of their companions, and the shouts of Dudley and his band, these men, who were in utter ignorance of what had passed, except that they had been made aware that the summit of the bastion was carried, threw down their arms, and sued for quarter.

"You shall have it, friends," cried Dudley, "provided you will fight for Queen Jane."

"Agreed!" replied the gunners. "Long live Queen Jane."

"Stand by me," returned Dudley, "and these stout walls shall either prove our safeguard or our tomb."

The gunners then saw how matters stood, but they could not retract; and they awaited a favorable opportunity to turn against their new masters.

Perceiving the course taken by Dudley and his companions, Renard felt certain of their capture, and repeated his injunctions to the soldiers to take him alive if possible, but on no account to suffer him to escape.

Dudley, meanwhile, endeavored with Cholmondeley to drag one of the large pieces of ordnance out of the embrasure in which it was placed, with the view of pointing it against their foes. But before this could be accomplished, the attack commenced. Darting to the head of the steps, Dudley valiantly defended the pass for some time; and the royalist soldiers, obedient to the injunctions of Renard, forbore to strike him, and sought only his capture. The arched roof rang with the clash of weapons, with the reports of shot, and with the groans of the wounded and dying. The floor beneath them soon became slippery with blood. Still, Dudley kept his ground. All at once he staggered and fell. A blow had been dealt him from behind by one of the gunners, who had contrived to approach him unawares.

"It is over," he groaned to his esquire, "finish me, and fly, if you can, to Jane."

Cholmondeley raised his sword to comply with his lord's injunctions, but the blow was arrested by the strong arm of Renard, who bestriding his prey, cried in a voice of exultation, "He is mine! Bear him to the Queen before he expires."

Cholmondeley heard no more, but darting backwards, sprang into the embrasure whence he had endeavored to drag the cannon, and forcing himself through the aperture, dropped from the dizzy height into the moat.

While this was passing, Mary proceeded to St. John's

Chapel in the White Tower. It was brilliantly illuminated, and high mass was being performed by Bonner and the whole of the priesthood assembled within the fortress. The transition from the roar and tumult without to this calm and sacred scene was singularly striking, and calculated to produce a strong effect on the feelings. There, all was strife and clamor; the air filled with smoke was almost stifling; and such places as were not lighted up by the blaze of the conflagration or the flashing of the ordnance and musketry, were buried in profound gloom. Here, all was light, odor, serenity, sanctity. Without, fierce bands were engaged in deathly fight—nothing was heard but the clash of arms, the thunder of cannon, the shouts of the victorious, the groans of the dying. Within, holy men were celebrating their religious rites, undisturbed by the terrible struggle around them, and apparently unconscious of it; tapers shone from every pillar; the atmosphere was heavy with incense; and the choral hymn mingled with the scarce-heard roar of cannon. Mary was so affected by the scene, that for the first time she appeared moved. Her bosom heaved, and a tear started to her eye.

"How peaceful is the holy place," she observed to Gardiner, "and what a contrast it presents to the scene we have just quitted! I could almost wish that Heaven had destined me to the cloister instead of the throne, that I might pass my days in the exercise of my religion."

"Heaven has destined you to be the restorer and defender of our religion, madam," replied Gardiner. "Had you not been called to the high station you occupy, the Catholic worship, so long discontinued in these holy walls, would not now be celebrated. To you we owe its restoration;—to you we must owe its continuance."

As Mary advanced to the altar, the anthem ceased, and silence prevailed throughout the sacred structure. Prostrating herself, she prayed for a few moments fervently, and in an audible voice. She then arose, and observed to

Gardiner, "I feel so much comforted, that I am assured Heaven will support me and our holy religion."

As she spoke, solemn music resounded through the chapel, the anthem was again chanted, and the priests resumed their holy rites. With a heart strengthened and elated, Mary ascended the staircase behind the altar, and passing through the gallery proceeded to the council-chamber, where she was informed that Xit, having captured a prisoner of importance, waited without to ascertain her pleasure concerning him. Mary ordered the dwarf to be brought into her presence with his captive, and in a few moments he was introduced with Bret, who was guarded by a couple of halberdiers.

On no previous occasion had Xit exhibited so much consequence as the present, and his accoutrements and fantastically-plumed casque added to his ludicrous appearance. He advanced slowly and majestically towards the chair of state in which Mary was seated, ever and anon turning his head to see that Bret was close behind him, and when within a short distance of the royal person, he made a profound salutation. Unluckily, in doing so, his helmet fell from his head, and rolled to the Queen's feet. Slightly discomposed by the accident, and still more by Mary's frowns, he picked up his helmet, and stammered forth—

"I am come to inform your Highness that I have taken a prisoner—taken him with my own hands——"

"Who is it?" interrupted Mary, glancing sternly at the captive, who remained with his arms folded upon his breast, and his eyes cast upon the floor. "Who is it?" she asked in an imperious tone.

"The arch-traitor Bret," answered Xit, "the captain of the London Trained Bands, who revolted from the Duke of Norfolk, and joined the rebels at Rochester."

"Bret!" ejaculated Mary, in a tone that made Xit recoil several steps with fright, while the prisoner himself looked up. "Aha! is the traitor then within our power? Take him without, and let the headsman deal with him."

"Your Highness!" cried Bret, prostrating himself.

"Away with him!" interrupted Mary. "Do you, my lord," she added to Gardiner, "see that my commands are obeyed."

The prisoner was accordingly removed, and Xit, who was completely awed by the Queen's furious looks, was about to slink off, when she commanded him to remain.

"Stay!" she cried. "I have promised on my queenly word, that whoso brought this traitor Bret to me, should have whatever he demanded. Art thou in good truth his captor? Take heed thou triflest not with me. I am in no mood for jesting."

"So I perceive, gracious madam," replied Xit. "But I swear to you I took him with my own hand, in fair and open combat. My companion Magog, if he survives the fray, will vouch for the truth of my statement—nay, Bret himself will not gainsay it."

"Bret will gainsay little more," rejoined Mary sternly; "his brain will contrive no further treason against us, nor his tongue give utterance to it. But I believe thee—the rather that I am persuaded thou darest not deceive me. Make thy request—it is granted."

"If I dared to raise my hopes so high," said Xit bashfully.

"What means the knave?" cried Mary. "I have said the request shall be granted."

"Whatever I ask?" inquired Xit.

"Whatever thou mayest ask in reason, sirrah!" returned Mary, somewhat perplexed.

"Well, then," replied Xit, "I should have claimed a dukedom. But as your Highness might possibly think the demand unreasonable, I will limit myself to knighthood."

In spite of herself, Mary could not repress a smile at the dwarf's extravagant request, and the terms in which it was couched.

"I have made many efforts to obtain this distinction,"

pursued Xit, "and for a while unsuccessfully. But fortune, or rather my bravery has at length favored me. I desire knighthood at your Majesty's hands."

"Thou shalt have it," replied Mary; "and it will be a lesson to me to make no rash promises in future. Hereafter, when affairs are settled, thou wilt not fail to remind me of my promise."

"Your Highness may depend upon it, I will not fail to do so," replied Xit, bowing and retiring. "Huzza!" he cried, as soon as he gained the antechamber. "Huzza!" he repeated, skipping in the air, and cutting as many capers as his armor would allow him, "at length, I have reached the height of my ambition. I shall be knighted. The Queen has promised it. Aha! my three noble giants, I am now a taller man than any of you. My lofty title will make up for my want of stature. Sir Xit!—that does not sound well. I must change my name for one more euphonious, or at least find out my surname. Who am I? It is strange I never thought of tracing out my history before. I feel I am of illustrious origin. I must clear up this point before I am knighted. Stand aside, base grooms," he continued to the grinning and jeering attendants, "and let me pass."

While pushing through them, a sudden bustle was heard behind, and he was very unceremoniously thrust back by Simon Renard, who was conducting Dudley to the Queen's presence.

"Another prisoner!" exclaimed Xit. "I wonder what Renard will get for his pains. If I could but take Wyat, my fortune were indeed made. First, I will go and see what has become of Bret; and then, if I can do so without much risk, I will venture outside the portcullis of the By-ward Tower. Who knows but I may come in for another good thing!"

Thus communing with himself, Xit went in search of the unfortunate captain of the Trained Bands, while Renard entered the council-chamber with Dudley. The latter, though faint from loss of blood, on finding himself

in the Queen's presence, exerted all his strength, and stood erect and unsupported.

"So far your Highness is victorious," said Renard; "one of the rebel leaders is in your power, and ere long all will be so. Will it please you to question him—or shall I bid Mauger take off his head at once?"

"Let me reflect a moment," replied Mary thoughtfully. "He shall die," she added, after a pause, "but not yet."

"It were better to behead him now," rejoined Renard.

"I do not think so," replied Mary. "Let him be removed to some place of safe confinement—the dungeon beneath St. John's Chapel."

"The only grace I ask from your Highness is speedy death," said Dudley.

"Therefore I will not grant it," replied Mary "No, traitor! you shall perish with your wife."

"Ah!" exclaimed Dudley, "I have destroyed her."

And as the words were pronounced, he reeled backwards, and would have fallen if the attendants had not caught him.

"Your Majesty has spared Mauger a labor," observed Renard sarcastically.

"He is not dead," replied Mary; "and if he were so, it would not grieve me. Remove him; and do with him as I have commanded."

Her injunctions were obeyed, and the inanimate body of Dudley was carried away.

Renard was proceeding to inform the Queen that the insurgents had been driven from the Brass Mount, when a messenger arrived, with tidings that another success had been gained—Sir Henry Jerningham having encountered the detachment under the Duke of Suffolk, and driven them back to their vessels, was about to assist the Earl of Pembroke and Sir Henry Bedingfeld in a sally upon Sir Thomas Wyat's party. This news so enchanted Mary, that she took a valuable ring from her finger and presented it to the messenger, saying—"I will double thy

fee, good fellow, if thou wilt bring me word that Wyat is slain, and his traitorous band utterly routed."

Scarcely had the messenger departed, when another appeared. He brought word that several vessels had arrived off the Tower, and attacked the squadron under the command of Admiral Winter; that all the vessels, with the exception of one, on board which the Duke of Suffolk had taken refuge, had struck; and that her Majesty might now feel assured of a speedy conquest. At this news Mary immediately fell on her knees, and cried—"I thank thee, O Lord! not that Thou has vouchsafed me a victory over my enemies, but that Thou has enabled me to triumph over Thine."

"The next tidings your Highness receives will be that the siege is raised," observed Renard, as the Queen arose; "and, with your permission, I will be the messenger to bring it."

"Be it so," replied Mary. "I would now gladly be alone."

As Renard issued from the principal entrance of the White Tower, and was about to cross the Green, he perceived a small group collected before St. Peter's Chapel, and at once guessing its meaning, he hastened towards it. It was just beginning to grow light, and objects could be imperfectly distinguished. As Renard drew nigh, he perceived a circle formed round a soldier whose breast-plate, doublet, and ruff had been removed, and who was kneeling with his arms crossed upon his breast beside a billet of wood. Near him, on the left, stood Mauger with his axe upon his shoulder, and on the right, Gardiner, holding a crucifix towards him, and earnestly entreating him to die in the faith of Rome; promising him, in case of compliance, a complete remission of his sins. Bret, for he it was, made no answer, but appeared, from the convulsive movement of his lips, to be muttering a prayer. Out of patience, at length Gardiner gave the signal to Mauger, and the latter motioned the rebel captain to lay his head upon the piece of timber. The practised executioner performed

his task with so much celerity that a minute had not elapsed before the head was stricken from the body, and placed on the point of a spear. While the apparatus of death and the blood-streaming trunk were removed, Xit, who was one of the spectators, seized the spear with its grisly burden, and bending beneath the load, bore it towards the By-ward Tower. A man-at-arms preceded him, shouting in a loud voice, "Thus perish all traitors."

Having seen this punishment inflicted, Renard hastened towards the By-ward Tower, and avoiding the concourse that flocked round Xit and his sanguinary trophy, took a shorter cut, and arrived there before them. He found Pembroke and Bedingfeld, as the messenger had stated, prepared with a large force to make a sally upon the insurgents. The signal was given by renewed firing from the roof and loopholes of the Middle Tower. Wyat, who had retired under the gateway of that fortification, and had drawn up his men in the open space behind it, now advanced at their head to the attack. At this moment the portcullis of the By-ward Tower was again raised, and the royalists issued from it. Foremost among them were the giants. The meeting of the two hosts took place in the centre of the bridge, and the shock was tremendous. For a short time the result appeared doubtful; but the superior numbers, better arms, and discipline of the Queen's party soon made it evident on which side victory would incline.

If conquest could have been obtained by personal bravery, Wyat would have been triumphant. Wherever the battle raged most fiercely he was to be found. He sought out Bedingfeld, and failing in reaching him, cut his way to the Earl of Pembroke, whom he engaged and would have slain, if Og had not driven him off with his exterminating mace. The tremendous prowess of the gigantic brethren, indeed, contributed in no slight degree to the speedy termination of the fight. Their blows were resistless, and struck such terror into their opponents, that a retreat was soon begun, which Wyat found it impos-

sible to check. Gnashing his teeth with anger, and uttering ejaculations of rage, he was compelled to follow his flying forces. His anger was vented against Gog. He aimed a terrible blow at him, and cut through his partisan, but his sword shivered against his morion. A momentary rally was attempted in the court between the Lions' Gate and the Bulwark Gate; but the insurgents were speedily driven out. On reaching Tower Hill, Wyat succeeded in checking them; and though he could not compel them to maintain their ground, he endeavored, with a faithful band, to cover the retreat of the main body to London Bridge. Perceiving his aim, Pembroke sent off a detachment under Bedingfeld, by Tower Street, to intercept the front ranks while he attacked the rear. But Wyat beat off his assailants, made a rapid retreat down Thames Street, and after a skirmish with Bedingfeld at the entrance of the bridge, in which he gained a decided advantage, contrived to get his troops safely across it, with much less loss than might have been anticipated. Nor was this all. He destroyed the planks which had afforded him passage, and took his measures so well and so expeditiously on the Southwark side, that Pembroke hesitated to cross the bridge and attack him.

The Tower, however, was delivered from its assailants. The three giants pursued the flying foe to the Bulwark. Gate, and then returned to the Middle Tower, which was yet occupied by a number of Wyat's party, and summoned them to surrender. The command was refused, unless accompanied by a pardon. The giants said nothing more, but glanced significantly at each other. Magog seized a ram, which had been left by the assailants, and dashed it against the door on the left of the gateway. A few tremendous blows sufficed to burst it open. Finding no one within the lower chamber, they ascended the winding stone staircase, their progress up which was opposed, but ineffectually by the insurgents. Magog pushed forward like a huge bull, driving his foes from step to step till they reached the roof, where a short but furious

encounter took place. The gigantic brethren fought back to back, and committed such devastation among their foes, that those who were left alive threw down their arms and begged for quarter. Disregarding their entreaties, the giants hurled them over the battlements. Some were drowned in the moat, while others were dashed to pieces in the court below.

"It is thus," observed Magog, with a grim smile to his brethren as the work of destruction was ended, "that the sons of the Tower avenge the insults offered to their parent."

On descending, they found Xit stationed in the centre of the bridge, carrying the spear with Bret's head upon it. The dwarf eagerly inquired whether they had taken Wyat; and being answered in the negative, expressed his satisfaction.

"The achievement is reserved for me," he cried; "no more laughter, my masters—no more familiarity. I am about to receive knighthood from the Queen." This announcement, however, so far from checking the merriment of the giants, increased it to such a degree, that the irascible mannikin dashed the gory head in their faces, and would have attacked them with the spear, if they had not disarmed him.

By this time, Sir Henry Bedingfeld had returned from the pursuit of the rebels. Many prisoners had been taken, and conveyed, by his directions, to a secure part of the fortress. Exerting himself to the utmost, and employing a large body of men in the work, the damages done to the different defences of the fortress were speedily repaired, the bodies of the slain thrown into the river, and all rendered as secure as before. The crews on board Winter's squadron had surrendered; but their commander, together with the Duke of Suffolk, had escaped, having been put ashore in a small boat. Conceiving all lost, and completely panic-stricken, the Duke obtained horses for himself and a few companions, and riding to Shene, where he had appointed a meeting with his brother, Lord

Thomas Grey, set off with him, at full speed, for Coventry, the inhabitants of which city he imagined were devoted to him. But he soon found out his error. Abandoned by his adherents, and betrayed into the hands of the Earl of Huntingdon, who had been sent after him, he was shortly afterwards brought a prisoner to the Tower.

Not to anticipate events, such was the expedition used, that in less than an hour, Bedingfeld conveyed to the Queen the intelligence that all damage done by the besiegers was repaired, and that her loss had been trifling compared with that of her enemies. He found her surrounded by her nobles; and on his appearance she arose, and advanced a few steps to meet him.

"You have discharged your office right well, Sir Henry," she said; "and if we deprive you of it for a while, it is because we mean to entrust you with a post of yet greater importance."

"Whatever office your Majesty may entrust me with, I will gladly accept it," replied Bedingfeld.

"It is our pleasure, then, that you set out instantly with the Earl of Sussex to Ashbridge," returned Mary, "and attach the person of the Princess Elizabeth. Here is your warrant. Bring her alive or dead."

"Alas!" exclaimed Bedingfeld, "is this the task your Highness has reserved for me?"

"It is," replied Mary; and she added in a lower tone, "you are the only man to whom I could confide it."

"I must perforce obey, since your Majesty wills it—but——"

"You must set out at once," interrupted Mary; "Sir Thomas Brydges shall be lieutenant of the Tower in your stead. We reserve you for greater dignities."

Bedingfeld would have remonstrated, but seeing the Queen was immovable, he signified his compliance, and having received further instructions, quitted the presence to make preparations for his departure.

The last efforts of the insurgents must be briefly told. After allowing his men a few hours' rest, Wyat made a

forced march to Kingston, and hastily repairing the bridge, which had been broken down, with planks, ladders, and beams tied together, passed over it with his ordnance and troops in safety, and proceeded towards London. In consequence of a delay that occurred on the road, his plan was discovered, and the Earl of Pembroke, having by this time collected a considerable army, drew up his forces in St. James's fields to give him battle.

A desperate skirmish took place, in which the insurgents, disheartened by their previous defeat, were speedily worsted. Another detachment, under the command of Knevet, were met and dispersed at Charing Cross by Sir Henry Jerningham, and would have been utterly destroyed, but that they could not be distinguished from the royalists, except by their muddy apparel, which occasioned the cry among the victors of "Down with the draggle-tails."

Wyat himself, who was bent upon entering the city, where he expected to meet with great aid from Throckmorton, dashed through all opposition and rode as far as the Belle Sauvage (even then a noted hostel) near Ludgate. Finding the gate shut and strongly defended, he rode back as quickly as he came to Temple Bar, where he was encountered by Sir Maurice Berkeley, who summoned him to surrender, and seeing it was useless to struggle further, for all his companions had deserted him, he complied. His captor carried him to the Earl of Pembroke; and as soon as it was known that the rebel leader was taken, the army was disbanded, and every man ordered to return to his home. Proclamation was next made that no one, on pain of death, should harbor any of Wyat's faction, but should instantly deliver them up to the authorities.

That same night Wyat, together with Knevet, Cobham, and others of his captains, were taken to the Tower by water. As Wyat, who was the last to disembark, ascended the steps of Traitor's Gate, Sir Thomas Brydges, the new lieutenant, seized him by the collar, crying,

"Oh! thou base and unhappy traitor! how couldst thou find in thy heart to work such detestable treason against the Queen's Majesty? Were it not that the law must pass upon thee, I would stab thee with my dagger."

Holding his arms to his side, and looking at him, as the old chroniclers report, "grievously, with a grim look," Wyat answered, "It is no mastery now." Upon which, he was conveyed with the others to the Beauchamp Tower.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW JANE SURRENDERED HERSELF A PRISONER; AND HOW SHE BESOUGHT QUEEN MARY TO SPARE HER HUSBAND.

Towards the close of the day following that on which the rebels were defeated, a boat, rowed by a single waterman, shot London Bridge, and swiftly approached the Tower wharf. It contained two persons, one of whom, apparently a female, was so closely muffled in a cloak that her features could not be discerned; while her companion, a youthful soldier, equipped in his full accoutrements, whose noble features were clouded with sorrow, made no attempt at concealment. As they drew near the stairs, evidently intending to disembark, the sentinels presented their arquebuses at them, and ordered them to keep off; but the young man immediately arose, and said that having been concerned in the late insurrection, they were come to submit themselves to the Queen's mercy. This declaration excited some surprise among the soldiers, who were inclined to discredit it, and would not have suffered them to land, if an officer of the guard, attracted by what was passing, had not interfered, and granted the request. By his command, they were taken across the drawbridge opposite the stairs, and placed within the guard-room near the By-ward Tower. Here the officer who had accompanied them demanded their names and condition, in order to report them to the lieutenant.

"I am called Cuthbert Cholmondeley," replied the young man, "somewhile esquire to Lord Guilford Dudley."

"You bore that rebel lord's standard in the attack on the Brass Mount—did you not?" demanded the officer sternly.

"I did," replied Cholmondeley.

"Then you have delivered yourself to certain death, young man," rejoined the officer. "What madness has brought you hither? The Queen will show you no mercy, and blood enough will flow upon the scaffold without yours being added to the stream."

"I desire only to die with my master," replied Cholmondeley.

"Where is Lord Guilford Dudley?" demanded the muffled female, in a tone of the deepest emotion.

"Confined in one of the secret dungeons—but I may not answer you further, madam," replied the officer.

"Are his wounds dangerous?" she continued, in a tone of the deepest anxiety.

"They are not mortal, madam," he answered. "He will live long enough to expiate his offences on the scaffold."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, with difficulty repressing a scream.

"No more of this—if you are a man," cried Cholmondeley fiercely. "You know not whom you address."

"I partly guess," replied the officer, with a compassionate look. "I respect your sorrows, noble lady—but oh!—why—why are you here? I would willingly serve you—nay, save you—but it is out of my power."

"My presence here must show you, sir, that I have no wish to avoid the punishment I have incurred," she replied. "I am come to submit myself to the Queen. But if you would serve me—serve me without danger to yourself, or departure from your duty—you will convey this letter without delay to her Highness's own hand."

"It may be matter of difficulty," rejoined the officer,

"for her Majesty is at this moment engaged in a secret conference in the Hall Tower, with the chancellor and the Spanish Ambassador. Nay, though I would not further wound your feelings, madam, she is about to sign the death-warrants of the rebels."

"The more reason then," she replied, in accents of supplicating eagerness, "that it should be delivered instantly Will you take it?"

The officer replied in the affirmative.

"Heaven's blessing upon you!" she fervently ejaculated.

Committing the captives to the guard, and desiring that every attention, consistent with their situation, should be shown them, the officer departed. Half-an-hour elapsed before his return, and during the interval but few words were exchanged between Cholmondeley and his companion. When the officer reappeared, she rushed towards him, and inquired what answer he brought.

"Your request is granted, madam," he replied. "I am commanded to bring you to the Queen's presence; and may your suit to her Highness prove as successful as your letter! You are to be delivered to the chief jailer, sir," he added to Cholmondeley, "and placed in close custody."

As he spoke, Nightgall entered the guard-room. At the sight of his hated rival, an angry flush rose to the esquire's countenance—nor was his wrath diminished by the other's exulting looks.

"You will not have much further power over me," he observed, in answer to the jailer's taunts. "Cicely, like Alexia, is out of the reach of your malice. And I shall speedily join them."

"You are mistaken," retorted Nightgall bitterly. "Cicely yet lives; and I will wed her on the day of your execution. Bring him away," he added to his assistants. "I shall take him, in the first place, to the torture-cham-

ber, and thence to the subterranean dungeons. I have an order to rack him."

"Farewell, madam," said the esquire, turning from him, and prostrating himself before his companion, who appeared in the deepest anguish; "we shall meet no more on earth."

"I have destroyed you," she cried. "But for your devotion to me, you might be now in safety."

"Think not of me, madam—I have nothing to live for," replied the esquire, pressing her hand to his lips. "Heaven support you in this your last, and greatest, and as—I can bear witness—most unmerited trial. Farewell forever!"

"Ay, forever!" repeated the lady. And she followed the officer; while Cholmondeley was conveyed by Nightgall and his assistants to the secret entrance of the subterranean dungeons near the Devilin Tower.

Accompanied by his charge, who was guarded by two halberdiers, the officer proceeded along the southern ward, in the direction of the Hall Tower—a vast circular structure, standing on the east of Bloody Tower. This fabric (sometimes called the Wakefield Tower from the prisoners confined within it, after the battle of that name in 1460, and more recently the Record Tower, from the use to which it has been put), is one of the oldest in the fortress, and though not coeval with the White Tower, dates back as far as the reign of William Rufus, by whom it was erected. It contains two large octagonal chambers —that on the upper story being extremely lofty, with eight deep and high embrasures, surmounted by pointed arches and separated by thin columns, springing from the groined arches formerly supporting the ceiling, which though unfortunately destroyed, corresponded, no doubt, with the massive and majestic character of the apartment. In this room tradition asserts that

——the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sank in the ground :—

it being the supposed scene of the murder of Henry the Sixth by the ruthless Gloster. And whatever doubts may be entertained as to the truth of that dark legend, it cannot be denied that the chamber itself seems stamped with the gloomy character of the occurrence. In recent times it has been devoted to a more peaceful purpose, and is now fitted up with presses containing the most ancient records of the kingdom. The room on the basement floor is of smaller dimensions, and much less lofty. The recesses, however, are equally deep, though not so high, and are headed by semicircular arches, At high tides it is flooded, and a contrivance for the escape of the water has been made in the floor.

Passing through an arched doorway on the east of this structure, where the entrance to the Record Office now stands, the officer conducted his prisoner up a spiral stone staircase, and left her in a small antechamber, while he announced her arrival. The unhappy lady still kept herself closely muffled. But though her features and figure were hidden, it was evident she trembled violently. In another moment, the officer reappeared, and motioning her to follow him, led the way along a narrow passage, at the end of which hangings were drawn aside by two ushers, and she found herself in the presence of the Queen.

Mary was seated at a table, near which stood Gardiner and Renard, and at the new-comer's appearance she instantly arose.

The interview about to be related took place in the large octangular chamber previously described. It was sumptuously furnished: the walls were hung with arras from the looms of Flanders, and the deep recesses occupied with couches, or sideboards loaded with costly cups and vessels.

Hastily advancing towards the Queen, the lady prostrated herself at her feet, and throwing aside her disguise, revealed the features of Jane. She extended her hands supplicatingly towards Mary, and fixed her stream-

ing eyes upon her, but was for some moments unable to speak.

"I am come to submit myself to your Highness's mercy," she said, as soon as she could find utterance.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mary scornfully. "You shall receive justice, but no mercy."

"I neither deserve nor desire it," replied Jane. "I have deeply, but not wilfully—Heaven is my witness!—offended your Majesty, and I will willingly pay the penalty of my fault."

"What would you with me?" demanded Mary. "I have acceded to this interview in consideration of your voluntary submission. But be brief. I have important business before me, and my heart is steeled to tears and supplications."

"Say not so, gracious madam," rejoined Jane. "A woman's heart can never be closed to the pleadings of the unfortunate of her own sex, still less the heart of one so compassionate as your Highness. I do not sue for myself."

"For whom, then?" demanded the Queen.

"For my husband," replied Jane.

"I am about to sign his death-warrant," replied Mary, in a freezing tone.

"I will not attempt to exculpate him, madam," returned Jane, restraining her emotion by a powerful effort, "for his offence cannot be extenuated. Nay, I deplore his rashness as much as your Highness can condemn it. But I am well assured that vindictiveness is no part of your royal nature—that you disdain to crush a fallen foe—and that, when the purposes of justice are answered, no sentiments but those of clemency will sway your bosom. I myself, contrary to my own wishes, have been the pretext for the late insurrection, and it is right I should suffer, because while my life remains, your Highness may not feel secure. But my husband has no claims, pretended or otherwise, to the throne, and when I am removed, all fear of him will be at an end. Let

what I have done speak my sincerity. I *could* have escaped to France, if I had chosen. But I did not choose to accept safety on such terms. Well knowing with whom I had to deal—knowing also that my life is of more importance than my husband's, I have come to offer myself for him. If your Highness has any pity for me, extend it to him, and heap his faults on my head."

"Jane," said Mary, much moved—"you love your husband devotedly."

"I need not say I love him better than my life, madam," replied Jane, "for my present conduct will prove that I do so. But I love him so well, that even his treason to your Highness, to whom he already owes his life, cannot shake it. O madam! as you hope to be happy in your union with the Prince of Spain—as you trust to be blessed with a progeny which shall continue on the throne of this kingdom—spare my husband—spare him for my sake."

"For *your* sake, Jane, I would spare him," replied Mary, in a tone of great emotion, "but I cannot."

"Cannot, madam!" cried Jane "you are an absolute Queen, and who shall say you nay? Not your Council —not your nobles—not your people—not your own heart. Your Majesty *can* and *will* pardon him. Nay, I read your gracious purpose in your looks. You will pardon him, and your clemency shall do more to strengthen your authority than the utmost severity could do."

"By St. Paul!" whispered Renard to Gardiner, who had listened with great interest to the conference, and now saw with apprehension the effect produced on Mary, "she will gain her point, if we do not interfere."

"Leave it to me," replied Gardiner. "Your Majesty will do well to accede to the Lady Jane's request," he remarked aloud to the Queen, "provided she will comply with your former proposition, and embrace the faith of Rome."

"Ay," replied Mary, her features suddenly lighting up, "on these terms I will spare him. But your recon-

ciliation with our holy Church," she added to Jane, "must be public."

"Your Highness will not impose these fatal conditions upon me?" cried Jane distractedly.

"On no other will I accede," replied Mary peremptorily. "Nay, I have gone too far already. But my strong sympathy for you as a wife, and my zeal for my religion, are my inducements. Embrace our faith, and I pardon your husband."

"I cannot," replied Jane, in accents of despair; "I will die for him, but I cannot destroy my soul alive."

"Then you shall perish together," replied Mary fiercely. "What ho! guards. Let the Lady Grey be conveyed to the Brick Tower, and kept a close prisoner during our pleasure."

And, waving her hand, Jane was removed by the attendants, while Mary seated herself at the table, and took up some of the papers with which it was strewn, to conceal her agitation.

"You struck the right key, my lord—bigotry," observed Renard, in an undertone to Gardiner.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH WAS BROUGHT A PRISONER TO THE TOWER.

Charged with the painful and highly-responsible commission imposed upon him by the Queen, Sir Henry Bedingfeld, accompanied by the Earl of Sussex and three others of the Council, Sir Richard Southwell, Sir Edward Hastings, and Sir Thomas Cornwallis, with a large retinue, and a troop of two hundred and fifty horse, set out for Ashbridge, where Elizabeth had shut herself up previously to the outbreak of Wyat's insurrection. On their arrival, they found her confined to her room with real or

feigned indisposition, and she refused to appear; but as their mission did not admit of delay, they were compelled to force their way to her chamber. The haughty Princess, whose indignation was roused to the highest pitch by the freedom, received them in such manner as to leave no doubt how she would sway the reins of government, if they should ever come within her grasp.

"I am guiltless of all design against my sister," she said, "and I shall easily convince her of my innocence. And then look well, sirs—you that have abused her authority—that I requite not your scandalous treatment."

"I would have declined the office," replied Bedingfeld; "but the Queen was peremptory. It will rejoice me to find you can clear yourself with her Highness, and I am right well assured, when you think calmly of the matter, you will acquit me and my companions of blame."

And he formed no erroneous estimate of Elizabeth's character. With all her proneness to anger, she had the strongest sense of justice. Soon after her accession, she visited the old knight at his seat, Oxburgh Hall, in Norfolk—still in the possession of his lineal descendant, the present Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and one of the noblest mansions in the county—and, notwithstanding his adherence to the ancient faith, manifested the utmost regard for him, playfully terming him "her jailer."

Early the next morning Elizabeth was placed on a litter, with her female attendants; and whether from the violence of her passion, or that she had not exaggerated her condition, she swooned, and on her recovery appeared so weak that they were obliged to proceed slowly. During the whole of the journey, which occupied five days, though it might have been easily accomplished in one, she was strictly guarded;—the greatest apprehension being entertained of an attempt at rescue by some of her party. On the last day she robed herself in white, in token of her innocence; and on her way to Whitehall, where the Queen was staying, she drew aside the curtains of her litter, and displayed a countenance, described in

Renard's despatches to the Emperor, as "proud, lofty, and superbly disdainful—an expression assumed to disguise her mortification." On her arrival at the palace, she earnestly entreated an audience of her Majesty, but the request was refused.

That night Elizabeth underwent a rigorous examination by Gardiner and nineteen of the Council, touching her privity to the conspiracy of De Noailles, and her suspected correspondence with Wyat. She admitted having received letters from the French Ambassador on behalf of Courtenay, for whom, notwithstanding his unworthy conduct, she still owned she entertained the warmest affection, but denied any participation in his treasonable practices, and expressed the utmost abhorrence of Wyat's proceedings. Her assertions, though stoutly delivered, did not convince her interrogators, and Gardiner told her that Wyat had confessed on the rack that he had written to her, and received an answer.

"Ah! says the traitor so?" cried Elizabeth. "Confront me with him, and if he will affirm as much to my face, I will own myself guilty."

"The Earl of Devonshire has likewise confessed, and has offered to resign all pretensions to your hand, and to go into exile, provided the Queen will spare his life," rejoined Gardiner.

"Courtenay faithless!" exclaimed the Princess, all her haughtiness vanishing, and her head declining upon her bosom, "then it is time I went to the Tower. You may spare yourselves the trouble of questioning me further, my lords, for by my faith I will not answer you another word—no, not even if you employ the rack."

Upon this, the Council departed. Strict watch was kept over her during the night. Above a hundred of the guard were stationed within the palace-gardens, and a great fire was lighted in the hall, before which Sir Henry Bedingfeld and the Earl of Sussex, with a large band of armed men, remained till daybreak. At nine o'clock, word was brought to the Princess that the tide suited for her con-

veyance to the Tower. It was raining heavily, and Elizabeth refused to stir forth on the score of her indisposition. But Bedingfeld told her the Queen's commands were peremptory, and besought her not to compel him to use force. Seeing resistance was in vain, she consented with an ill grace, and as she passed through the garden to the water-side, she cast her eyes towards the windows of the palace, in the hope of seeing Mary, but was disappointed.

The rain continued during the whole of her passage, and the appearance of everything on the river was as dismal and depressing as her own thoughts. But Elizabeth was not of a nature to be easily subdued. Rousing all her latent energy, she bore up firmly against her distress. An accident had well-nigh occurred as they shot London Bridge. She had delayed her departure so long that the fall was considerable, and the prow of the boat struck upon the ground with such force as almost to upset it, and it was some time before it righted. Elizabeth was wholly unmoved by their perilous situation, and only remarked that "she would that the torrent had sunk them." Terrible as the stern old fortress appeared to those who approached it under similar circumstances, to Elizabeth it assumed its most appalling aspect. Gloomy at all times, it looked gloomier than usual now, with the rain driving against it in heavy scuds, and the wind, whistling round its ramparts and fortifications, making the flagstaff and the vanes on the White Tower creak, and chilling the sentinels exposed to its fury to the bone. The storm agitated the river, and the waves more than once washed over the sides of the boat.

"You are not making for Traitor's Gate?" cried Elizabeth, seeing that the skiff was steered in that direction; "it is not fit that the daughter of Henry the Eighth should land at those steps."

"Such are the Queen's commands," replied Bedingfeld sorrowfully. "I dare not for my head disobey."

"I will leap overboard sooner," rejoined Elizabeth.

"I pray your Highness to have patience," returned Bed-

ingfeld, restraining her. "It would be unworthy of you —of your great father, to take so desperate a step."

Elizabeth compressed her lips and looked sternly at the old knight, who made a sign to the rowers to use their utmost despatch; and, in another moment, they shot beneath the gloomy gateway. The awful effect of passing under this dreadful arch has already been described, and Elizabeth, though she concealed her emotion, experienced its full horrors. The water-gate revolved on its massive hinges, and the boat struck against the foot of the steps. Sussex and Bedingfeld, and the rest of the guard and her attendants, then landed, while Sir Thomas Brydges, the new lieutenant, with several warders advanced to the top of the steps to receive her. But she would not move, but continued obstinately in the boat, saying, "I am no traitor, and do not choose to land here."

"You shall *not* choose, madam," replied Bedingfeld authoritatively. "The Queen's orders must, and *shall* be obeyed. Disembark, I pray you, without more ado, or it will go hardly with you."

"This from you, Bedingfeld," rejoined Elizabeth reproachfully, "and at such a time, too?"

"I have no alternative," replied the knight.

"Well then, I will not put you to further shame," replied the Princess, rising.

"Will it please you to take my cloak as a protection against the rain?" said Bedingfeld, offering it to her. But she pushed it aside "with a good dash," as old Foxe relates; and springing on the steps, cried in a loud voice, "Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever set foot on these stairs. And before Thee, O God, I speak it, having no other friend but Thee."

"Your Highness is unjust," replied Bedingfeld, who stood bareheaded beside her; "you have many friends, and amongst them none more zealous than myself. And if I counsel you to place some restraint upon your conduct, it is because I am afraid it may be disadvantageously reported to the Queen."

"Say what you please of me, sir," replied Elizabeth; "I will not be told how I am to act by you, or any one."

"At least move forward, madam," implored Bedingfeld; "you will be drenched to the skin if you tarry here longer and will fearfully increase your fever."

"What matters it if I do?" replied Elizabeth, seating herself on the damp step, while the shower descended in torrents upon her. "I will move forward at my own pleasure—not at your bidding. And let us see whether you will dare to use force towards me."

"Nay, madam, if you forget yourself, I will not forget what is due to your father's daughter," replied Bedingfeld, "you shall have ample time for reflection."

The deeply-commiserating and almost paternal tone in which this reproof was delivered touched the Princess sensibly; and glancing round, she was further moved by the mournful looks of her attendants, many of whom were deeply affected, and wept audibly. As soon as her better feelings conquered, she immediately yielded to them; and, presenting her hand to the old knight, said—

"You are right, and I am wrong, Bedingfeld. Take me to my dungeon."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOW NIGHTGALL WAS BRIBED BY DE NOAILLES TO ASSASSINATE SIMON RENARD; AND HOW JANE'S DEATH-WARRANT WAS SIGNED.

The Tower was now thronged with illustrious prisoners. All the principal personages concerned in the late rebellion, with the exception of Sir Peter Carew, who had escaped to France, were confined within its walls; and the Queen and her Council were unremittingly employed in their examinations. The Duke of Suffolk had written and subscribed his confession, throwing himself upon the royal mercy; Lord Guilford

Dudley, who was slowly recovering from his wound, refused to answer any interrogatories; while Sir Thomas Wyat, whose constancy was shaken by the severity of the torture to which he was exposed, admitted his treasonable correspondence with Elizabeth and Courtenay, and charged De Noailles with being the originator of the plot. The latter was likewise a prisoner. But as it was not the policy of England, at that period, to engage in a war with France, he was merely placed under personal restraint until an answer could be received from Henry the Second, to whom letters had been sent by Mary.

Well instructed as to the purport of these despatches, and confident of his sovereign's protection, De Noailles felt little uneasiness as to his situation, and did not even despair of righting himself by some master-stroke. His grand object was to remove Renard; and as he could not now accomplish this by fair means, he determined to have recourse to foul; and to procure his assassination. Confined, with certain of his suite, within the Flint Tower, he was allowed, at stated times, to take exercise on the Green, and in other parts of the fortress, care being taken to prevent him from holding communication with the other prisoners, or, indeed, with any one except his attendants. De Noailles, however, had a ready and unsuspected instrument at hand. This was his jailer, Lawrence Nightgall, with whom he had frequent opportunities of conversing, and whom he had already sounded on the subject. Thus, while every dungeon in the fortress was filled with the victims of his disastrous intrigues; while its subterranean chambers echoed with the groans of the tortured; while some expired upon the rack, others were secretly executed, and the public scaffold was prepared for sufferers of the highest rank; while the axe and the block were destined to frequent and fearful employment, and the ensanguined ground thirsted for the best and purest blood in England; while such was the number of captives that all the prisons in London were insufficient to contain them, and they were bestowed within the

churches; while twenty pairs of gallows were erected in the public places of the city, and the offenders with whom they were loaded left to rot upon them as a terrible example to the disaffected; while universal dread and lamentation prevailed—the known author of all this calamity remained, from prudential reasons, unpunished, and pursued his dark and dangerous machinations as before.

One night, when he was alone, Nightgall entered his chamber, and, closing the door, observed, with a mysterious look,—"Your Excellency has thrown out certain dark hints to me of late. You can speak safely now, and I pray you do so plainly. What do you desire me to do?"

De Noailles looked scrutinizingly at him, as if he feared some treachery. But at length, appearing satisfied, he said abruptly, "I desire Renard's assassination. His destruction is of the utmost importance to my king."

"It is a great crime," observed Nightgall musingly.

"The reward will be proportionate," rejoined De Noailles.

"What does your Excellency offer?" asked Nightgall.

"A thousand angels of gold," replied the Ambassador, "and a post at the court of France, if you will fly thither when the deed is done."

"By my troth, a tempting offer," rejoined Nightgall. "But I am under great obligations to M. Simon Renard. He appointed me to my present place. It would appear ungrateful to kill him."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed De Noailles contemptuously. "You are not the man to let such idle scruples stand in the way of your fortune. Renard only promoted you because you were useful to him. And he would sacrifice you as readily, if it suited his purpose. He will serve you better dead than living."

"It is a bargain," replied Nightgall. "I have the keys of the subterranean passages, and can easily get out of the Tower when I have despatched him. Your Excellency can fly with me if you think proper."

"On no account," rejoined De Noailles. "I must not appear in the matter. Come to me when the deed is done, and I will furnish you with means for your flight, and with a letter to the King of France, which shall insure you your reward when you reach Paris. But it must be done quickly."

"It shall be done to-morrow night," replied Nightgall. "Fortunately, M. Renard has chosen for his lodgings the chamber in the Bloody Tower in which the two princes were murdered."

"A fitting spot for his own slaughter," remarked De Noailles dryly.

"It is so, in more ways than one," replied Nightgall; "for I can approach him unawares by a secret passage, through which, when all is over, escape will be easy."

"Good!" exclaimed De Noailles, rubbing his hands gleefully. "I should like to be with you at the time. Mortdieu! how I hate that man. He has thwarted all my schemes. But I shall now have my revenge. Take this ring and this purse in earnest of what is to follow, and mind you strike home."

"Fear nothing," replied Nightgall, smiling grimly, and playing his dagger; "the blow shall not need to be repeated. Your Excellency's plan chimes well with a project of my own. There is a maiden whom I have long sought, but vainly, to make my bride. I will carry her off with me to France."

"She will impede your flight," observed De Noailles hastily. "On all difficult occasions, women are sadly in the way."

"I cannot leave her," rejoined Nightgall.

"Take her, then, in the devil's name," rejoined De Noailles peevishly; "and if she brings you to the gallows, do not forget my warning."

"My next visit shall be to tell you your enemy is no more," returned Nightgall. "Before midnight to-morrow you may expect me." And he quitted the chamber.

While his destruction was planned in the manner above

related, Simon Renard was employing all his art to crush by one fell stroke all the heads of the Protestant party. But he met with opposition from quarters where he did not anticipate it. Though the Queen was convinced of Elizabeth's participation in the plot, as well from Wyat's confession, who owned that he had written to her during his march to London, offering to proclaim her Queen, and had received favorable answers from her—as from the declaration of a son of Lord Russell, to the effect, that he had delivered the despatches into her own hand, and brought back her replies;—notwithstanding this, Mary refused to pass sentence upon her, and affected to believe her innocent. Neither would she deal harshly with Courtenay, though equally satisfied of his guilt; and Renard, unable to penetrate her motives, began to apprehend that she still nourished a secret attachment to him. The truth was, the Princess and her lover had a secret friend in Gardiner, who counteracted the sanguinary designs of the Ambassador. Baffled in this manner, Renard determined to lose no time with the others. Already, by his agency, the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Thomas Grey, and Wyat, were condemned —Dudley and Jane alone were wanting to the list.

Touched by a strong feeling of compassion for their youth, and yet more by the devotion Jane had exhibited to her husband, Mary hesitated to sign their death-warrant. She listened to all Renard's arguments with attention, but they failed to move her. She could not bring herself to put a period to the existence of one whom she knew to be so pure, so lovly, so loveing, so blameless, as Jane. But Renard was determined to carry his point.

"I will destroy them all," he said; "but I will begin with Dudley and Jane, and end with Courtenay and Elizabeth."

During the examination of the conspirators, the Queen though she had moved her court to Whitehall, passed much of her time at the Tower, occupied in reading the depositions of the prisoners, or in framing interrogatories to put to them. She also wrote frequent despatches to

the Emperor, whose counsel she asked in her present difficulties; and while thus occupied, she was often closeted for hours with Renard.

Whether by accident, or that the gloomy legend connected with it, harmonizing with his own sombre thoughts, gave it an interest in his eyes, Renard had selected for his present lodging in the Tower, as intimated by Nightgall, the chamber in which the two youthful princes were destroyed. It might be that its contiguity to the Hall Tower, where Mary now for the most part held her conferences with her Council, and with which it was connected by a secret passage, occasioned this selection—or he might have been influenced by other motives—suffice it to say he there took up his abode; and was frequently visited within it by Mary. Occupying the upper story of the Bloody Tower, this mysterious chamber looks on the north upon the ascent leading to the Green, and on the south upon St. Thomas's Tower. It is now divided into two rooms by a screen—that to the south being occupied as a bedchamber; and tradition asserts that in this part of the room the "piece of ruthless butchery" which stamps it with such fearful interest was perpetrated. On the same side, between the outer wall and the chamber, runs a narrow passage, communicating on the west with the ballium wall, and thence with the lieutenant's lodgings, by which the murderers are said to have approached; and in the inner partition is a window, through which they gazed upon their sleeping victims. On the east, the passage communicates with a circular staircase, descending to a small vaulted chamber at the right of the gateway, where the bodies were interred. In later times this mysterious room has been used as a prison lodging. It was occupied by Lord Ferrers during his confinement in the Tower, and more recently by the conspirators Watson and Thistlewood.

On the evening appointed by Nightgall for the assassination of Renard, the proposed victim and the Queen were alone within this chamber. The former had re-

newed all his arguments, and with greater force than ever, and seeing he had produced the desired impression, he placed before her the warrant for the execution of Jane and her husband.

"Your Majesty will never wear your crown easily till you sign that paper," he said.

"I shall never wear it easily afterwards," sighed Mary. "Do you not remember Jane's words? She told me, I should be fortunate in my union, and my race should continue upon the throne, if I spared her husband. They seem to me prophetic. If I sign this warrant I may destroy my own happiness."

"Your Highness will be not turned from your purpose by such idle fears," rejoined Renard, in as sarcastic a tone as he dared assume. "Not only your throne may be endangered, if you suffer them to live, but the Catholic religion."

"True," replied Mary, "I will no longer hesitate."

And she attached her signature to the warrant.

Renard watched her with a look of such fiendish exultation, that an unseen person who gazed at the moment into the room, seeing a tall dark figure, dilated by the gloom, for it was deepening twilight, and a countenance from which everything human was banished, thought he beheld a demon, and, fascinated by terror, could not withdraw his eyes. At the same moment, too, the Queen's favorite dog, which was couched at her feet, and for a short time previously had been uttering a low growl, now broke into a fierce bark, and sprang towards the passage-window. Mary turned to ascertain the cause of the animal's disquietude, and perceived that it had stiffened in every joint, while its barking changed to a dismal howl. Not without misgiving, she glanced towards the window —and there, at the very place whence she had often heard that the murderers had gazed upon the slumbering innocents before the bloody deed was done—there, between those bars, she beheld a hideous black mask, through the holes of which glared a pair of flashing orbs.

THE DEATH WARRANT

Repressing a cry of alarm, she called Renard's attention to the object, when she was equally startled by his appearance. He seemed transfixed with horror, with his right hand extended towards the mysterious object, and clenched, while the left grasped his sword. Suddenly, he gained his consciousness, and drawing his rapier, dashed to the door—but ere he could open it, the mask had disappeared. He hurried along the passage in the direction of the lieutenant's lodgings, when he encountered some one who appeared to be advancing towards him. Seizing this person by the throat and presenting his sword to his breast, he found from the voice that it was Nightgall.

NORTH VIEW OF THE BLOODY TOWER,

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH WAS CONFRONTED WITH SIR THOMAS WYAT IN THE TORTURE-CHAMBER.

As Elizabeth passed beneath the portal of the Bloody Tower on her way to the lieutenant's lodgings, whither she was conducted after quitting Traitor's Gate by Bedingfeld and Sussex, she encountered the giants, who doffed their caps at her approach, and fell upon their knees. All three were greatly affected, especially Magog,

whose soft and sensitive nature was completely overcome. Big tears rolled down his cheeks, and in attempting to utter a few words of consolation his voice failed him. Touched by his distress, Elizabeth halted for a moment, and laying her hand on his broad shoulder, said in a tone, and with a look calculated to enforce her words, "Bear up, good fellow, and like a man. If I shed no tears for myself, those who love me need shed none. It is the duty of my friends to comfort—not to dishearten me. My case is not so hopeless as you think. The Queen will never condemn the innocent and unheard. Get up, I say, and put a bold face on the matter, or you are not your father's son."

Roused by this address, Magog obeyed, and rearing his bulky frame to its full height, so that his head almost touched the spikes of the portcullis, cried in a voice of thunder, "Would your innocence might be proved by the combat, madam, as in our——" and he hesitated—"I mean your royal father's time! I would undertake to maintain your truth against any odds. Nay, I and my brethren would bid defiance to the whole host of your accusers."

"Though I may not claim you as champions," replied Elizabeth, "I will fight my own battle as stoutly as you could fight it for me."

"And your Grace's courage will prevail," rejoined Og.

"My innocence will," returned Elizabeth.

"Right," cried Gog. "Your Grace, I am assured, would no more harbor disloyalty against the Queen than we should, seeing that——"

"Enough," interrupted the Princess hastily. "Farewell, good friends," she continued, extending her hand to them, which they eagerly pressed to their lips, "farewell! Be of good cheer. No man shall have cause to weep for me."

"This is a proud, though a sad day," observed Og, who was the last honored by the Princess's condescension, "and will never be obliterated from my memory. By my father's beard!" he added, gazing rapturously at the

long, taper fingers he was permitted to touch, "it is the most beautiful hand I ever beheld, and whiter than the driven snow."

Pleased by the compliment—for she was by no means insensible to admiration—Elizabeth forgave its unseasonableness for its evident sincerity, and smilingly departed. But she had scarcely ascended the steps leading to the Green, when she was chilled by the sight of Renard, who was standing at the northern entrance of the Bloody Tower, wrapped in his cloak, and apparently waiting to see her pass.

As she drew near, he stepped forward, and made her a profound but sarcastic salutation. His insolence, however, failed in its effect upon Elizabeth. Eyeing him with the utmost disdain, she observed to Bedingfeld, "Put that Spanish knave out of my path. And he who will remove him from the Queen's councils will do both her and me a good turn."

"Your Grace has sufficient room to pass," returned Renard, with bitter irony, and laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword, as if determined to resist any attempt to remove him. "Your prison within the Bell Tower is prepared, and if my counsels have any weight with her Majesty, you will quit it only to take the same path, and ascend the same scaffold as your mother, Anne Boleyn."

"Another such taunt," cried Sussex fiercely, "and neither, the sacred character of your office nor the protection of the Queen shall save you from my sword."

And he thrust him forcibly backwards.

Elizabeth moved on at a slow and stately pace, while the guard closing round her and Sussex, opposed the points of their halberds to the infuriated Ambassador.

"Your Highness has increased Renard's enmity," observed Bedingfeld, with a troubled look.

"I fear him not," replied Elizabeth dauntlessly. "Let him do his worst. English honesty will ever prove more than a match for Spanish guile."

Entering the lieutenant's lodgings, and traversing the

long gallery already described as running in a westerly direction, Elizabeth soon reached the upper chamber of the Bell Tower, which, she was informed by Sir Thomas Brydges, was appointed for her prison.

"It is a sorry lodging for a king's daughter," she observed, "and for one who may be Queen of this realm. But since my sister will have it so, I must make shift with it. How many attendants are allowed me?"

"One female," replied Brydges.

"Why not deprive me of all?" cried the Princess passionately. "This chamber will barely accommodate me. I will be alone."

"As your Grace pleases," replied Brydges, "but I cannot exceed my authority."

"Can I write to the Queen?" demanded Elizabeth.

"You will be furnished with writing materials, if it is your purpose to prepare your confession," returned the lieutenant. "But it must be delivered to the Council, who will exercise their discretion as to transmitting it to her Highness."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Princess, "am I at *their* mercy!"

"Alas! madam, you are so," replied Bedingfeld; "but the Chancellor is your friend."

"I am not sure of it," returned Elizabeth. "Oh that I could see the Queen, were it but for one minute. My mother perished because she could not obtain a hearing of my royal sire, whose noble nature was abused in respect to her; and the Duke of Somerset himself told me, that if his brother the Admiral had been allowed speech of him, he would never have consented to his death. But it is ever thus. The throne is surrounded by a baneful circle, whose business is to prevent the approach of truth. They keep me from my sister's presence well knowing that I could clear myself at once, while they fill her ears with false reports. Bedingfeld, you are her faithful servant, and therefore not my enemy. Tell her, if she will grant me an audience alone, or before her councillors, I will either approve my innocence or consent to

lose my head. Above all, implore her to let me be confronted with Wyat, that the truth may be extorted from him."

"The interview would little benefit your Grace," remarked Brydges. "Wyat confesses your privity to the rebellion."

"He lies," replied Elizabeth fiercely. "The words have been put into his mouth with the vain hope of pardon. But he will recant them if he sees me. He dare not—will not look me in the face, and aver that I am a partner in his foul practices. But I will not believe it of him. Despite his monstrous treason, he is too brave, too noble-minded, to act so recreant a part."

"Wyat has undergone the question ordinary and extraordinary, madam," replied Brydges; "and though he endured the first with surprising constancy, his fortitude sank under the severity of the latter application."

"I forgive him," rejoined Elizabeth in a tone of deep commiseration. "But it proves nothing. He avowed thus much to escape further torture."

"It may be," returned Brydges, "and for your Grace's sake I hope it is so. But his confession, signed with his own hand, has been laid before the Queen."

"Ah?" exclaimed Elizabeth, sinking into the only seat which the dungeon contained.

"I beseech your Highness to compose yourself," cried Bedingfeld compassionately. "We will withdraw and leave you the the care of your attendant."

"I want no assistance," replied Elizabeth, recovering herself. "Will you entreat her Majesty to grant me an audience on the terms I have named, and in the presence of Wyat?"

"It must be speedy, then," remarked Brydges, "for he is adjudged to die to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" echoed Elizabeth. "Nay, then, good Bedingfeld, seek the Queen without delay. Implore her by the love she once bore me—by the love I am assured she bears me still—to interrogate me before this traitor.

If he perishes with this confession uncontradicted, I am lost."

"Your words shall be repeated to her Highness," replied Bedingfeld, "and I will not fail to add my entreaties to your own. But I cannot give a hope that your request will be granted."

"It is fortunate for your Highness that the Queen visits the Tower to-day," observed Brydges. "Her arrival is momently expected. As I live!" he exclaimed, as the bell was rung overhead, and answered by the beating of drums and the discharge of cannon from the batteries, "she is here!"

"It is Heaven's interposition in my behalf," cried Elizabeth. "Go to her at once, Bedingfeld. Let not the traitor Renard get the start of you. I may live to requite the service. Go—go."

The old knight obeyed, and the others immediately afterwards retired, closing the door upon the Princess, and placing a guard outside.

Left alone, Elizabeth flew to the narrow and strongly-grated loophole commanding the southern ward, through which the Queen must necessarily pass on her way to the palace, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. She had not to wait long. Loud fanfares of trumpets resounded from the gate of the By-ward Tower. These martial flourishes were succeeded by the trampling of steeds, and fresh discharges of ordnance, and the next moment a numerous retinue of horse and foot emerged from the gateway. Just as the royal litter appeared, it was stopped by Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and the curtains were drawn aside by Mary's own hand. It was a moment of intense interest to Elizabeth, and she watched the countenance of the old knight, as if her life depended upon each word he uttered. At first she could not see the Queen's face, but as Bedingfeld concluded, Mary leaned forward, and looked up at the Bell Tower. Uncertain whether she could be seen, Elizabeth determined to make her presence known, and thrusting her hand

through the bars, waved her kerchief. Mary instantly drew back. The curtains of the litter were closed; Bedingfeld stepped aside; and the cavalcade moved on.

"She will not see me!" cried Elizabeth, sinking back in despair. "I shall perish like my mother."

The Princess's agitation did not subside for some time. Expecting Bedingfeld to return with the tidings that Mary had refused her request, she listened anxiously to every sound, in the hope that it might announce his arrival. Hour after hour passed by and he came not, and concluding that he did not like to be the bearer of ill news, or what was yet more probable, that he was not allowed to visit her, she made up her mind to the worst. Elizabeth had not the same resources as Jane under similar circumstances. Though sincerely religious, she had not the strong piety that belonged to the other, nor could she, like her, divorce herself from the world, and devote herself wholly to God. Possessing the greatest fortitude, she had no resignation, and while capable of enduring any amount of physical suffering, could not control her impatience. Her thoughts were bitter and mortifying enough, but she felt no humiliation; and the only regrets she indulged were at having acted so unwise a part. Scalding tears bedewed her cheeks—tears that would never have been shed if any one had been present; and her mingled emotions of rage and despair were so powerful, that she had much ado to overcome them. Ungovernable fury against Mary took possession of her, and she pondered upon a thousand acts of revenge. Then came the dreadful sense of her present situation—of its hopelessness—its despair. She looked at the stone walls by which she was enclosed, and invoked them to fall upon her and crush her; and she rushed towards the massive and iron-girded door, as if she would dash herself against it with impotent fury. Her breast was ravaged by fierce and conflicting passions; and when she again returned to her seat, she grasped it convulsively to prevent herself from executing the desperate deeds that

suggested themselves to her. In after years, when the crown was placed upon her head, and she grasped one of the most powerful sceptres ever swayed by female hand —when illustrious captives were placed in that very dungeon by her command, and one royal victim, near almost to her as a sister, lingered out her days in hopeless captivity, only to end them on the block—at such seasons she often recalled her own imprisonment—often in imagination endured its agonies, but never once with a softened or relenting heart. The sole thought that now touched her, and subdued her violence, was that of Courtenay. Neither his unworthiness nor his inconstancy could shake her attachment. She loved him deeply and devotedly, with all the strength and fervor of her character; and though she had much difficulty in saving him from her contempt, this feeling did not abate the force of her regard. The idea that he would perish with her, in some degree reconciled her to her probable fate.

Thus meditating, alternately roused by the wildest resentment, and, softened by thoughts of love, Elizabeth passed the remainder of the day without interruption. Worn out at length, she was about to dispose herself to slumber, when the door was opened, and Sir Thomas Brydges, accompanied by two serving-men and a female attendant, entered the room. Provisions were placed before her by the men, who instantly withdrew, and Brydges was about to follow, leaving the female attendant behind, when Elizabeth stopped him, and inquired what answer Sir Henry Bedingfeld had brought from the Queen.

"My orders are to hold no communication with your Grace," replied the lieutenant.

"At least, tell me when I am to be examined by the Council?" rejoined Elizabeth. "The meanest criminal has a right to be so informed."

But Brydges shook his head, and quitting the chamber, closed the door, and barred it outside.

Controlling her feelings, as she was now no longer

alone, Elizabeth commanded her attendant to awaken her in an hour, and threw herself upon the couch. Her injunctions were strictly complied with, and she arose greatly refreshed. A lamp had been left her, and taking up a book of prayers, she addressed herself to her devotions, and while thus occupied her mind gradually resumed its composure. About midnight the door was opened by the lieutenant, who entered the room attended by Nightgall, and two other officials in sable robes, while a guard of halberdiers, bearing torches, remained without.

"I must request your Grace to follow me," said Brydges.

"Whither?" demanded Elizabeth, rising. "To the Queen's presence?"

The lieutenant made no answer.

"To the Council?" pursued the Princess; "or to execution? No matter. I am ready." And she motioned the lieutenant to lead on.

Sir Thomas Brydges obeyed, and followed by the Princess, traversed the gallery, descended the great staircase, and entered a spacious chamber on the ground floor. Here he paused for a moment, while a sliding panel in the wall was opened, through which he and his companion passed.

A short flight of stone steps brought them to a dark narrow passage, and they proceeded silently and slowly along it, until their progress was checked by a strong iron door, which was unfastened and closed behind them by Nightgall. The jarring of the heavy bolts, as they were shot into their sockets, resounded hollowly along the arched roof of the passage, and smote forcibly upon Elizabeth's heart, and she required all her constitutional firmness to support her.

They were now in one of those subterranean galleries, often described before, on either side of which were cells, and the clangor called forth many a dismal response. Presently afterwards, they arrived at the head of a staircase, which Elizabeth descended, and found herself in the

torture-chamber. A dreadful spectacle met her gaze. At one side of the room, which was lighted by a dull lamp from the roof, and furnished as before with numberless hideous implements—each seeming to have been recently employed—sat, or rather was supported, a wretched man upon whom every refinement of torture had evidently been practised. A cloak was thrown over his lower limbs, but his ghastly and writhen features proved the extremity of suffering to which he had been subjected. Elizabeth could scarcely believe that in this miserable object, whom it would have been a mercy to despatch, she beheld the once bold and haughty Sir Thomas Wyat.

Placed on the corner of a leathern couch, and supported by Wolfytt and Sorrocold, the latter of whom bathed his temples with some restorative, Wyat fixed his heavy eyes upon the Princess. But her attention was speedily diverted from him to another person, whose presence checked her feelings. This was the Queen, who stood on one side with Gardiner and Renard. Opposite them was Courtenay, with his arms folded upon his breast. The latter looked up as Elizabeth entered the chamber, and after gazing at her for a moment, turned his regards with an irrepressible shudder to Wyat. Knowing that her safety depended upon her firmness. though her heart bled for the tortured man, Elizabeth disguised all appearance of compassion, and throwing herself at the Queen's feet, cried, "Heaven bless your Highness for granting me this interview! I can now prove my innocence."

"In what way?" demanded Mary coldly. "It would indeed rejoice me to find I have been deceived. But I cannot shut my ears to the truth. Yon traitor," she continued, pointing to Wyat, "who dared to rise in arms against his sovereign, distinctly charges you with participation in his rebellious designs. I have his confession, taken from his own lips, and signed with his own hand, wherein he affirms, by his hopes of mercy from the Su-

preme Judge before whom he will shortly appear to answer for his offences, that you encouraged his plans for my dethronement, and sought to win the crown for yourself, in order to bestow it with your hand upon your lover Courtenay."

"It is false," cried Elizabeth; "false as the caitiff who invented it—false as the mischievous councillor who stands beside you, and who trusts to work my ruin; but, by our father's soul, it shall go hard if I do not requite him! Your Majesty has not a more loyal subject than myself, nor has any of your subjects a more loving sister. This wretched Wyat, whose condition would move my pity were he not so heinous a traitor, may have written to me, but, on my faith, I have never received his letters."

"Lord Russell's son declares that he delivered them into your own hands," observed Mary.

"Another lie, as false as the first," replied Elizabeth. "It is a plot, your Highness—a contrivance of my enemy Simon Renard. Where is Lord Russell's son? Why is he not here?"

"You shall see him anon, since you desire it," replied Mary. "Like yourself, he is a prisoner in the Tower. But these assertions do not clear you."

"Your Highness says you have Wyat's confession," rejoined Elizabeth. "What faith is to be attached to it? It has been wrung from him by the severity of the torture to which he has been subjected. Look at his shattered frame, and say whether it is not likely he would purchase relief from such suffering as he must have endured at any cost. The sworn tormentors are here. Let them declare how often they have stretched him on the rack—how often applied the thumbscrew—how often delivered him to the deadly embraces of the scavenger's daughter, before this false charge was wrung from him. Speak, fellows! how often have you racked him?"

But the tormentors did not dare to reply. A stifled groan broke from Wyat, and a sharp convulsion passed over his frame.

"The question has only extorted the truth," observed Mary.

"If the accusation so obtained be availing, the retraction must be equally so," replied Elizabeth. "Sir Thomas Wyat," she exclaimed, in a loud and authoritative tone, and stepping towards him, "if you would not render your name for ever infamous, you will declare my innocence."

The sufferer gazed at her, as if he did not clearly comprehend what was said to him.

Elizabeth repeated the command, and in a more peremptory tone.

"What have I declared against you?" asked Wyat faintly.

"You have accused me of countenancing your traitorous practices against the Queen's Highness, who now stands before you," rejoined Elizabeth. "You well know it is false. Do not die with such a stain upon your knighthood and your honor. The worst is over. Further application of the rack would be fatal, and it will not be resorted to, because you would thus escape the scaffold. You can have therefore, no object in adhering to this vile fabrication of my enemies. Retract your words, I command you, and declare my innocence."

"I do," replied Wyat in a firm tone. "I have falsely accused you, and was induced to do so in the hope of pardon. I unsay all I have said, and will die proclaiming your innocence."

"It is well," replied Elizabeth, with a triumphant glance at the Queen.

"Place me at the feet of the Princess," said Wyat to his supporters. "Your pardon, madam," he added, as the order was obeyed.

"You have it," replied Elizabeth, scarcely able to repress her emotion. "May God forgive you, as I do."

"Then your former declaration was false, thou perjured traitor?" cried Mary, in amazement.

"What I have said, I have said," rejoined Wyat;

"what I now say is the truth." And he motioned the attendants to raise him, the pain of kneeling being too exquisite for endurance.

"And you will adhere to your declaration?" pursued Mary.

"To my last breath," gasped Wyat.

"At whose instigation were you induced to charge the Princess with conspiring with you?" demanded Renard, stepping forward.

"At yours," returned Wyat, with a look of intense hatred. "You who have deceived the Queen—deceived me—and would deceive the devil, your master, if you could—you urged me to it—you—ha! ha!" And with a convulsive attempt at laughter, which communicated a horrible expression to his features, he sank into the arms of Wolfytt, and was conveyed to a cell at the back of the chamber, the door of which was closed.

"My innocence is established," said Elizabeth, turning to the Queen.

"Not entirely," answered Mary. "Wyat's first charge was supported by Lord Russell's son."

"Take me to him, or send for him hither," rejoined Elizabeth. "He has been suborned, like Wyat, by Renard. I will stake my life that he denies it."

"I will not refute the idle charge brought against me," observed Renard, who had been for a moment confounded by Wyat's accusation. "Your Majesty will at once discern its utter groundlessness."

"I ask no clemency for myself," interposed Courtenay, speaking for the first time; "but I beseech your Highness not to let the words of that false and crafty Spaniard weigh against your sister. From his perfidious counsels all these disasters have originated."

"You would screen the Princess in the hope of obtaining her hand, my lord," replied Mary. "I see through your purpose, and will defeat it."

"So far from it," replied the Earl, "I here solemnly renounce all pretensions to her."

"Courtenay!" exclaimed Elizabeth, in a tone of anguish.

"Recent events have cured me of love and ambition," pursued the Earl, without regarding her. "All I desire is freedom."

"And is it for one so unworthy that I have entertained this regard?" cried Elizabeth. "But I am rightly punished."

"You are so," replied Mary bitterly. "And you now taste some of the pangs you inflicted upon me."

"Hear me, gracious madam," cried Courtenay, prostrating himself before the Queen. "I have avowed thus much, that you may attach due credit to what I am about to declare concerning Renard. My heart was yours, and yours only, till I allowed myself to be influenced by him. I knew not then his design, but it has since been fully revealed. It was to disgust you with me that he might accomplish the main object of his heart—the match with the Prince of Spain. He succeeded too well. Utterly inexperienced, I readily yielded to the allurements he spread before me. My indiscretions were reported to you. But failing in alienating me from your regard, he tried a deeper game, and chose out as his tool the Princess Elizabeth.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mary.

"He it was," pursued Courtenay, "who first attracted my attention towards her, who drew invidious comparisons between her youthful charms and your Majesty's more advanced age. He it was who hinted at the possibility of an alliance between us, who led me on step by step till I was completely enmeshed. I will own it, I became desperately enamored of the Princess. I thought no more of your Highness—of the brilliant prospects lost to me; and blinded by my passion, became reckless of the perilous position in which I placed myself. But now that I can look calmly behind me, I see where and why I fell; and I fully comprehend the tempter's motives."

"What says your Excellency to this?" demanded Mary sternly.

"Much that the Earl of Devonshire has asserted is true," replied Renard. "But in rescuing your Majesty, at any cost, from so unworthy an alliance, I deserve your thanks rather than your reprobation. And I shall ever rejoice that I have succeeded."

"You have succeeded at my expense, and at the expense of many of my bravest and best subjects," replied Mary severely. "But the die is cast, and cannot be recalled."

"True," replied Renard, with a smile of malignant satisfaction.

"Will your Highness pursue your investigations further to-night?" demanded Gardiner.

"No," replied the Queen, who appeared lost in thought. "Let the Princess Elizabeth be taken back to the Bell Tower, and Courtenay to his prison in the Bowyer Tower, I will consider upon their sentence. Wyat is respited for the present. I shall interrogate him further."

With this, she quitted the torture-chamber with her train, and the prisoners were removed as she had directed.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW XIT DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF HIS BIRTH; AND HOW HE WAS KNIGHTED UNDER THE TITLE OF SIR NARCISSUS LE GRAND.

Life is full of the saddest and the strongest contrasts. The laugh of derision succeeds the groan of despair—the revel follows the funeral—the moment that ushers the new-born babe into existence, is the last, perchance, of its parent—without the prison walls, all is sunshine and happiness—within, gloom and despair. But throughout the great city which it commanded, search where you

might, no stronger contrasts of rejoicing and despair could be found than were now to be met with in the Tower of London. While, on the one hand, every dungeon was crowded, and scarcely an hour passed that some miserable sufferer did not expire under the hand of the secret tormentor or the public executioner; on the other, there was mirth, revelry, and all the customary celebrations of victory. As upon Mary's former triumph over her enemies, a vast fire was lighted in the centre of the Tower Green, and four oxen, roasted whole at it, were distributed, together with a proportionate supply of bread, and a measure of ale or mead, in rations, to every soldier in the fortress: and as may be supposed, the utmost joviality prevailed. To each warder was allotted an angel of gold, and a dish from the royal table, while to the three giants were given the residue of a grand banquet, a butt of Gascoign wine, and, in consideration of their valiant conduct during the siege, their yearly fee, by the Queen's command, was trebled. On the night of these festivities a magnificent display of fireworks took place on the Green, and an extraordinary illumination was effected by means of a row of barrels filled with pitch, ranged along the battlements of the White Tower, which being suddenly lighted, cast forth a glare that illumined the whole fortress, and was seen at upwards of twenty miles' distance.

Not unmindful of the Queen's promise, Xit, though unable to find a favorable opportunity of claiming it, did not fail to assume all the consequence of his anticipated honors. He treated those with whom he associated with the utmost haughtiness; and though his arrogant demeanor only excited the merriment of the giants, it drew many a sharp retort, and not a few blows, from such as were not disposed to put up with his insolence. The subject that perpetually occupied his thoughts was the title he ought to assume; for he was thoroughly dissatisfied with his present appellation. "Base and contemptible name!" he exclaimed. "How I loathe it!—and how did

I acquire it? It was bestowed upon me, I suppose, in my infancy, by Og, to whose care I was committed. A mystery hangs over my birth. I must unravel it. Let me see: Two-and-twenty years ago (come Martinmas), I was deposited at the door of the By-ward Tower in a piece of blanket!—unworthy swaddling-cloth for so illustrious an infant—a circumstance which fully proves that my noble parents were anxious for concealment. Stay! I have heard of changelings—of elfin children left by fairies in the room of those they steal. Can I be such a one? A shudder crosses my frame at the bare idea. And yet my activity, my daring, my high mental qualities, my unequalled symmetry of person, small though it be—all these seem to warrant the supposition. Yes! I am a changeling. I am a fairy child. Yet hold! this will not do. Though I may entertain these notions in secret of my alliance with the invisible world, they will not be accepted by the incredulous multitude. I must have some father, probable or improbable. Who could he have been? Or who *might* he have been? Let me see. Sir Thomas More was imprisoned in the Tower about the time of my birth. Could I not be his son? It is more than probable. So was the Bishop of Rochester. But to claim descent from him would bring scandal upon the Church. Besides, he was a Catholic prelate. No, it must be Sir Thomas More. That will account for my wit. Then about the same time there were the Lord Darcy; and Robert Salisbury, Abbot of Vale Crucis; the Prior of Doncaster; Sir Thomas Percy; Sir Francis Bygate; and Sir John Bulmer. All these were prisoners, so that I have plenty to choose from. I will go and consult Og. I wonder whether he has kept the piece of blanket in which I was wrapped. It will be a gross omission if he has not."

The foregoing soliloquy occurred in one of the galleries of the palace, where the vainglorious mannikin was lingering in the hope of being admitted to the royal presence. No sooner did the idea of consulting Og on the subject of his birth occur to him, than he set off to the By-ward

Tower, where he found the two unmarried giants employed upon a huge smoking dish of baked meat, and notwithstanding his importunity, neither of them appeared willing to attend to him. Thus baffled, and his appetite sharpened by the savory odor of the viands, Xit seized a knife and fork, and began to ply them with great zeal. The meal over, and two ponderous jugs that flanked the board emptied of their contents, Og leaned his huge frame against the wall, and in a drowsy tone informed the dwarf that he was ready to listen to him.

"No sleeping, then my master," cried Xit, springing upon his knee, and tweaking his nose. "I have a matter of the utmost importance to consult you about. You must be wide awake."

"What is it?" replied the good-humored giant, yawning as if he would have swallowed the teasing mannikin.

"It relates to my origin," replied Xit. "Am I the son of a nobleman?"

"I should rather say you were the offspring of some ape escaped from the menagerie," answered Og, bursting into a roar of laughter, in which he was joined by Gog, much to the discomfiture of the cause of their merriment. "You have all the tricks of the species."

"Dare to repeat that insinuation, base Titan," cried Xit furiously, and drawing his sword, "and I will be thy death. I am as illustriously descended as thyself, and on both sides too, whereas thy mother was a frowzy fishwife. Know that I am the son of Sir Thomas More."

"Sir Thomas More!" echoed both giants, laughing more immoderately than ever. "What has put that notion into thy addle pate?"

"My better genius," replied Xit, "and unless you can show me who *was* my father, I shall claim descent from him."

"You will only expose yourself to ridicule," returned Og, patting the mannikin's shock head—a familiarity which he resented,—"and though I and my brethren

laugh at you, and make a jest of you, we do not desire others to do so."

"Once graced by knighthood, no man, be he of my stature or of yours, my overgrown master, shall make a jest of me with impunity," replied Xit, proudly. "But since you think I am *not* the son of Sir Thomas More, from whom can I safely claim descent?"

"I would willingly assist you to a father," replied Og, smothering a laugh, "but on my faith, I can think of none more probable than Hairun's pet monkey, or perhaps old Max."

"Anger me not," shrieked Xit, in extremity of fury, "or you will rue it. What has become of the blanket in which I was wrapped?"

"The blanket!" exclaimed Og; "why, it was a strip scarcely bigger than my hand."

"Is it lost?" demanded Xit eagerly.

"I fear so," replied Og. "Stay! now I recollect, I patched an old pair of hose with it."

"Patched a pair of hose with it!" cried Xit. "You deserve to go in tatters during the rest of your days. You have destroyed the sole clue to my origin."

"Nay, if that blanket will guide you, I have taken the best means of preserving it," rejoined Og, "for I think I have the hose still."

"Where are they?" inquired Xit. "Let me see them instantly."

"If they still exist, they are in a large chest in the upper chamber," replied Og. "But be not too much elated, for I fear we shall be disappointed."

"At all events, let us search without a moment's delay," rejoined Xit, jumping down, and hurrying up the staircase.

He was followed somewhat more leisurely by the two giants, and the trunk was found crammed under a heap of lumber into an embrasure. The key was lost, but as Xit's impatience would not allow him to wait to have it unfastened by a smith, Og forced it open with the head

of a halbert. It contained a number of old buskins, cloaks of all hues and fashions, doublets, pantoufles, caps, buff-boots, and hose. Of the latter there were several pairs, and though many were threadbare enough, it did not appear that any were patched.

Xit, who had plunged into the trunk to examine each article, was greatly disappointed.

"I fear they are lost," observed Og.

"It would seem so," replied Xit, "for there are only a doublet and cloak left. Oh that a worshipful knight's history should hang on so slight a tenure!"

"Many a knight's history has hung on less," replied Gog. "But what have we rolled up in that corner?"

"As I live, a pair of watchet-colored hose," cried Xit.

"The very pair we are in quest of," rejoined Og. "Unfold them, and you will find the piece of blanket in the seat."

Xit obeyed, and mounting on the side of the box held out the huge garments, and there, undoubtedly in the region intimated by Og, was a piece of dirty flannel.

"And this, then, was my earliest covering," apostrophized Xit. "In this fragment of woollen cloth my tender limbs were swathed!"

"Truly were they," replied Og, laughing. "And when I first beheld thee it was ample covering. But what light does it throw upon thy origin?"

"That remains to be seen," returned Xit. And unsheathing his dagger he began to unrig the piece of flannel from the garment in which it was stitched.

The two giants watched his proceedings in silence, and glanced significantly at each other. At length Xit tore it away.

"It is a labor in vain," observed Og.

"Not so," replied Xit. "See you not that this corner is doubled over. There is a name worked within it."

"The imp is right," cried Og. "How came I to overlook it?"

And he would have snatched the flannel from Xit, but

the dwarf darted away, crying, "No one shall have a hand in the discovery but myself. Stand off."

Trembling with eagerness, he then cut open the corner, and found, worked withinside, the words—

"NARCISSUS LE GRAND."

"Narcissus le Grand!" exclaimed Xit triumphantly. "That was my father's title. He must have been a nobleman."

"If that was your father's name," returned Gog—"and I begin to think you have stumbled upon the right person at last—he was a Frenchman, and groom of the pantry to Queen Anne Boleyn."

"He was a dwarf like yourself," added Og, "and though the ugliest being I ever beheld, had extraordinary personal vanity."

"In which respect he mightily resembled his son," laughed Gog; "and since we have found out the father, I think I can give a shrewd guess at the mother."

"I hope she was a person of distinction?" cried Xit, whose countenance had fallen at the knowledge he had acquired of his paternity.

"She was a scullion," replied Gog—"by name Mab Leatherbarrow."

"A scullion!" ejaculated Xit indignantly. "I the son of a scullion—and of one so basely named as Leatherbarrow—impossible!"

"I am as sure of it as of my existence," replied Og. "Your mother was not a jot taller, or more well favored than your father; and they both, I now remember, disappeared about the time you were found."

"Which name will you adopt—Le Grand, or Leatherbarrow?" demanded Gog maliciously.

"This is an unlucky discovery," thought Xit. "I had better have left my parentage alone. The son of a groom of the pantry and a scullion. What a degrading conjunction! However, I will make the most of it, and not let them have the laugh against me. I shall assume my

father's name," he added aloud—" Sir Narcissus le Grand ; and a good, well-sounding title it is, as need be desired."

"It is to be hoped all will have forgotten the former bearer of it," laughed Og.

"I care not who remembers it," replied Xit ; " the name bespeaks noble descent. Call me in future Narcissus le Grand. The title fits me exactly—Narcissus expressing my personal accomplishments—Le Grand my majesty. For the present you may put 'master' to my name. You will shortly have to use a more honorable style of address. Farewell, sirs."

And thrusting the piece of flannel into his doublet, he strutted to the door.

" Farewell, sweet Master Narcissus," cried Og.

" Farewell, Leatherbarrow," added Gog.

"Le Grand," corrected Xit, halting, with a dignified air; "Le Grand, henceforth, is my name." And he marched off with his head so erect that, unfortunately missing his footing, he tumbled down the staircase. Picking himself up before the giants, whose laughter enraged him, could reach him, he darted off, and did not return till a late hour, when they had retired to rest.

Two days after this discovery—the Queen being then at the Tower—as he was pacing the grand gallery of the palace, according to custom, an usher tapped him on the shoulder, and desired him to follow him. With a throbbing heart Xit obeyed, and putting all the dignity he could command into his deportment, entered the presence-chamber. On that very morning, as good luck would have it, his tailor had brought him his new habiliments ; and arrayed in a purple velvet mantle lined with carnation-colored silk, a crimson doublet slashed with white, orange-tawny hose, yellow buskins fringed with gold, and a green velvet cap, decorated with a plume of ostrich feathers, and looped with a diamond aigrette, he cut, in his own opinion, no despicable figure.

If the dwarf had entertained any doubts as to why he was summoned, they would have been dispersed at once,

as he advanced, by observing that the three giants stood at a little distance from the Queen, and that she was attended only by a few dames of honor, her female jester, and the vice-chamberlain, Sir John Gage, who held a crimson velvet cushion, on which was laid a richly-ornamented sword. A smile crossed the Queen's countenance as Xit drew nigh, and an irrepressible titter spread among the dames of honor. Arrived within a few yards of the throne, the mannikin prostrated himself as gracefully as he could. But he was destined to mishaps. And in this the most important moment of his life, his sword, which was of extraordinary length got between his legs, and he was compelled to remove it before his knee would touch the ground.

"We have not forgotten our promise—rash though it was," observed Mary, "and have summoned thy comrades to be witness to the distinction we are about to confer upon thee. In the heat of the siege, we promised that whoso would bring us Bret, alive or dead, should have his request, be it what it might. Thou wert his captor, and thou askest——"

"Knighthood at your Majesty's hands," supplied Xit.

"How shall we name thee?" demanded Mary.

"Narcissus le Grand," replied the dwarf. "I am called familiarly Xit; but it is a designation by which I do not desire to be longer distinguished."

Mary took the sword from Sir John Gage, and placing it upon the dwarf's shoulder, said, "Arise, Sir Narcissus."

The new-made knight immediately obeyed, and making a profound reverence to the Queen, was about to retire, when she checked him.

"Tarry a moment, Sir Narcissus," she said. "I have a further favor to bestow upon you."

"Indeed!" cried the dwarf, out of his senses with delight. "I pray your Majesty to declare it."

"You will need a dame," returned the Queen.

"Of a truth," replied Sir Narcissus, tenderly ogling the bevy of beauties behind the throne, "I need one sadly."

"I will choose for you," said the Queen.

"Your Highness's condescension overwhelms me," rejoined Sir Narcissus, wondering which would fall to his share.

"This shall be your bride," continued the Queen, pointing to Jane the Fool, "and I will give her a portion."

Sir Narcissus had some ado to conceal his mortification. Receiving the announcement with the best grace he could assume, he strutted up to Jane, and taking her hand, said, "You hear her Highness's injunctions, sweetheart. You are to be Lady le Grand. I need not ask your consent, I presume?"

"You shall never have it," replied Jane the Fool, with a coquettish toss of the head, "if her Highness did not command it."

"I shall require to exert my authority early," thought Sir Narcissus, "or I shall share the fate of Magog."

"I myself will fix the day for your espousals," observed Mary. "Meanwhile, you have my permission to woo your intended bride for a few minutes in each day."

"*Only* a few minutes!" cried Sir Narcissus, with affected disappointment. "I could dispense with even that allowance," he added to himself.

"I cannot reward your services as richly," continued Mary, addressing the gigantic brethren, "but I am not unmindful of them, nor shall they pass unrequited. Whenever you have a boon to ask, hesitate not to address me."

The three giants bowed their lofty heads.

"A purse of gold will be given to each of you," continued the Queen, "and on the day of his marriage, I shall bestow a like gift upon Sir Narcissus," She then waved her hand, and the new-made knight and his companions withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW CHOLMONDELEY LEARNED THE HISTORY OF CICELY; HOW NIGHTGALL ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE RENARD; AND OF THE TERRIBLE FATE THAT BEFEL HIM.

Cuthbert Cholmondeley, after upwards of a week's solitary confinement, underwent a rigorous examination by certain of the Council relative to his own share in the conspiracy, and his knowledge of the different parties connected with it. He at once admitted that he had taken a prominent part in the siege, but refused to answer any other questions. "I confess myself guilty of treason and rebellion against the Queen's Highness," he said, "and I ask no further mercy than a speedy death. But if the word of one standing in peril of his life may be taken, I solemnly declare, and call upon you to attest my declaration, that the Lady Jane Grey is innocent of all share in the recent insurrection. For a long time she was kept in total ignorance of the project, and when it came to her knowledge, she used every means, short of betraying it —tears, entreaties, menaces—to induce her husband to abandon the design."

"This declaration will not save her," replied Sir Edward Hastings, who was one of the interrogators, sternly. "By not revealing the conspiracy, she acquiesced in it. Her first duty was to her sovereign."

"I am aware of it, and so is the unfortunate lady herself," replied Cholmondeley. "But I earnestly entreat you, in pity for her misfortunes, to report what I have said to the Queen."

"I will not fail to do so," returned Hastings; "But I will not deceive you. Her fate is sealed. And now, touch-

ing the Princess Elizabeth's share in this unhappy affair. Do you know aught concerning it ? "

" Nothing whatever," replied Cholmondeley ; and if I did, I would not reveal it."

" Take heed what you say, sir," rejoined Sir Thomas Brydges, who was likewise among the examiners, " or I shall order you to be more sharply questioned."

Nightgall heard this menace with savage exultation.

" The rack will wrest nothing from me," said Cholmondeley firmly.

Brydges immediately sat down at the table, and writing out a list of questions to be put to the prisoner, added an order for the torture, and delivered it to Nightgall.

Without giving Cholmondeley time to reflect upon his imprudence, the jailer hurried him away, and he did not pause till he came to the head of the stairs leading to the torture-chamber. On reaching the steps Nightgall descended first, but though he opened the door with great caution, a glare of lurid light burst forth, and a dismal groan smote the ears of the listener. It was followed by a creaking noise, the meaning of which the esquire too well divined.

Some little time elapsed before the door was again opened, and the voice of Nightgall was heard from below calling to his attendants to bring down the prisoner. The first object that caught Cholmondeley's gaze on entering the fatal chamber, was a figure covered from head to foot in a bloody-colored cloth. The sufferer, whoever he was, had just been released from the torture, as two assistants were supporting him, while Wolfytt was arranging the ropes on the rack. Sorrocold, also, who held a small cup filled with some pungent-smelling liquid, and a sprinkling-brush in his hand, was directing the assistants.

Horror-stricken at the sight, and filled with the conviction from the mystery observed, and the stature of the veiled person, that it was Lord Guilford Dudley, Cholmondeley uttered his name in a tone of piercing anguish. At the cry, the figure was greatly agitated—the arms

struggled, and it was evident that an effort was made to speak; but only an inarticulate sound could be heard. The attendants looked disconcerted, and Nightgall, stamping his foot angrily, ordered them to take their charge away. But Cholmondeley perceiving their intention broke from those about him, and throwing himself at the feet of him whom he supposed to be Dudley, cried, "My dear, dear lord, it is I, your faithful esquire, Cuthbert Cholmondeley. Make some sign, if I am right in supposing it to be you."

The figure struggled violently, and shaking off the officials, raised the cloth, and disclosed the countenance of the unfortunate nobleman—but oh! how changed since Cholmondeley had seen him last—how ghastly, how distorted, how deathlike, were his features!

"You here!" cried Dudley. "Where is Jane? Has she fled? Has she escaped?"

"She has surrendered herself," replied Cholmondeley, "in the hope of obtaining your pardon."

"False hope!—delusive expectation!" exclaimed Dudley, in a tone of the bitterest anguish. "She will share my fate. I could have died happy—could have defied these engines, if she had escaped—but now!——"

"Away with him!" interposed Nightgall. "Throw the cloth over his head."

"O God! I am her destroyer!" shrieked Dudley, as the order was obeyed, and he was forced out of the chamber.

Cholmondeley was then seized by Wolfytt and the others, and thrown upon his back on the floor. He made no resistance, well knowing it would be useless; and he determined, even if he should expire under the torture, to let no expression of anguish escape him. He had need of all his fortitude; for the sharpness of the suffering to which he was subjected by the remorseless Nightgall was such as few could have withstood. But not a groan burst from him, though his whole frame seemed rent asunder by the dreadful tension.

"Go on," cried Nightgall, finding that Wolfytt and the others paused. "Turn the rollers round once more."

"You will wrench his bones from their sockets—he will expire if you do," observed Sorrocold.

"No matter," replied Nightgall; "I have an order to question him sharply, and I will do so, at all hazards."

"Do so at your own responsibility, then," replied Sorrocold, retiring. "I tell you he will die if you strain him further."

"Go on, I say," thundered Nightgall. But as he spoke, the sufferer fainted, and Wolfytt refused to comply with the jailer's injunctions.

Cholmondeley was taken off the engine. Restoratives were applied by Sorrocold, and the questions proposed by the lieutenant put to him by Nightgall. But he returned no answer; and uttering an angry exclamation at his obstinacy, the jailer ordered him to be taken back to his cell, where he was thrown upon a heap of straw, and left without light or food.

For some time Cholmondeley remained in a state of insensibility, and when he recovered, it was to endure far greater agony than he had experienced on the rack. His muscles were so strained that he was unable to move, and every bone in his body appeared broken. The thought, however, that Cicely was alive, and in the power of his hated rival, tormented him more sharply than his bodily suffering. Supposing her dead, though his heart was ever constant to her memory, and though he was a prey to deep and severe grief, yet the whirl of events in which he had been recently engaged had prevented him from dwelling altogether upon her loss. But now, when he knew that she still lived, and was in the power of Nightgall, all his passion—all his jealousy returned with tenfold fury. The most dreadful suspicions crossed him; and his mental anguish was so great as to be almost intolerable. While thus tortured in body and mind, the door, of his cell was opened, and Nightgall entered, dragging

after him a female. The glare of the lamp so dazzled Cholmondeley's weakened vision, that he involuntarily closed his eyes. But what was his surprise to hear his own name pronounced by well-known accents, and as soon as he could steady his gaze, to behold the features of Cicely; but so pale, so emaciated, that he could scarcely recognize them.

"There," cried Nightgall, with a look of fiendish exultation, pointing to Cholmondeley. "I told you you should see your lover. Glut your eyes with the sight. The arms that should have clasped you are nerveless; the eyes that gazed so passionately upon you, dim; the limbs that won your admiration crippled. Look at him—and for the last time. And let him gaze on you, and see whether in these death-pale features—in this wasted form, there are any remains of the young and blooming maiden that won his heart."

"Cicely," cried Cholmondeley, making an ineffectual attempt to rise, "do I indeed behold you? I thought you dead."

"Would I were so," she cried, kneeling beside him, "rather than what I am. And to see you thus—and without the power to relieve you."

"You *can* relieve me of the worst pang I endure," returned Cholmondeley. "You have been long in the power of that miscreant—exposed to his violence, his ill-usage, to the worst of villainy. Has he dared to abuse his power? Do not deceive me! Has he wronged you?—Are you his minion? Speak! And the answer will either kill me at once, or render my death on the scaffold happy. Speak! Speak!"

"I am yours, and yours only—in life or death, dear Cholmondeley," replied Cicely. "Neither entreaties nor force should make me his."

"The time is come when I will show you no further consideration," observed Nightgall moodily. "And if the question your lover has just asked is repeated, it shall be differently answered. You shall be mine to-morrow,

either by your own free consent or by force. I have spared you thus long, in the hope that you would relent and not compel me to have recourse to means I would willingly avoid. Now, hear me. I have brought you hither to gratify my vengeance upon the miserable wretch writhing at my feet, who has robbed me of your affections, and whose last moments I would embitter by the certainty that you are in my power. But though it will be much to me to forego the promised gratification of witnessing his execution, or knowing that he will be executed, yet I will purchase your compliance even at this price. Swear to wed me to-morrow, and to accompany me unresistingly whithersoever I may choose to take you, and in return, I swear to free him."

"He made a like proposal once before, Cicely," cried the esquire. "Reject it. Let us die together."

"It matters little to me how you decide," cried Nightgall. "Mine you shall be, come what will."

"You hear what he says, Cholmondeley," cried Cicely distractedly. "I cannot escape him. Oh, let me save you!"

"Never!" rejoined Cholmondeley, trying to stretch his hands towards her. "Never! You torture me by this hesitation. Reject it, if you love me, positively—peremptorily!"

"O Heaven, direct me!" cried Cicely, falling upon her knees. "If I refuse, I am your destroyer."

"You will utterly destroy me, if you yield," groaned Cholmondeley.

"Once wedded to me," urged Nightgall, "you shall set him free yourself."

"Oh no, no, no!" cried Cicely. "Death were better than that. I cannot consent. Cholmondeley, you must die."

"You bid me live," returned the esquire.

"You have signed his death-warrant!" cried Nightgall, seizing her hand. "Come along."

"I will die here," shrieked Cicely, struggling.

"Villain!" cried Cholmondeley, "your cruelty will turn her brain, as it did that of her mother Alexia."

"How do you know Alexia was her mother?" demanded Nightgall, starting, and relinquishing his grasp of Cicely.

"I am sure of it," replied Cholmondeley. "And what is more, I am acquainted with the rightful name and title of your victim. She was the wife of Sir Alberic Mountjoy, who was attainted of heresy and high treason, in the reign of Henry the Eighth."

"I will not deny it," replied Nightgall. "She was so. But how did you learn this?"

"Partly from an inscription upon a small silver clasp, which I found upon her hood when I discovered her body in the Devilin Tower," replied Cholmondeley; "and partly from inquiries since made. I have ascertained that the Lady Mountjoy was imprisoned with her husband in the Tower; and that at the time of his execution she received a pardon. I would learn from you why she was subsequently detained?—why she was called Alexia?—and why her child was taken from her?"

"She lost her senses on the day of her husband's death," replied Nightgall. "I will tell you nothing more."

"Alas!" cried Cicely, who had listened with breathless interest to what was said, "hers was a tragical history."

"Yours will be still more tragical, if you continue obstinate," rejoined Nightgall. "Come along."

"Heaven preserve me from this monster!" she shrieked. "Help me, Cholmondeley."

"I am powerless as a crushed worm," groaned the esquire in a tone of anguish.

Nightgall laughed exultingly, and twining his arms around Cicely, held his hand over her mouth to stifle her cries, and forced her from the cell.

The sharpest pang he had recently endured was light to Cholmondeley compared with his present maddening

sensations, and had not insensibility relieved him, his reason would have given way. How long he remained in this state he knew not, but, on reviving, he found himself placed on a small pallet, and surrounded by three men in sable dresses. His attire had been removed, and two of these persons were chafing his limbs with an ointment, which had a marvellous effect in subduing the pain, and restoring pliancy to the sinews and joints; while the third, who was no other than Sorrocold, bathed his temples with a pungent liquid. In a short time he felt himself greatly restored, and able to move; and when he thought how valuable the strength he had thus suddenly and mysteriously acquired would have been a short time ago, he groaned aloud.

"Give him a cup of wine," said an authoritative voice, which Cholmondeley fancied he recognized, from the further end of the cell. And glancing in the direction of the speaker, he beheld Renard.

"It may be dangerous, your Excellency," returned Sorrocold.

"Dangerous or not, he shall have it," rejoined Renard.

And wine was accordingly poured out by one of the attendants, and presented to the esquire, who eagerly drained it.

"Now leave us," said Renard; "and return to the torture-chamber. I will rejoin you there."

Sorrocold and his companions bowed, and departed.

Renard then proceeded to interrogate Cholmondeley respecting his own share in the rebellion, and also concerning Dudley and Lady Jane. Failing in obtaining satisfactory answers, he turned his inquiries to Elizabeth's participation in the plot; and he shaped them so artfully that he contrived to elicit from the esquire, whose brain was a good deal confused by the potent draught he had swallowed, some important particulars relative to the Princess's correspondence with Wyat.

Satisfied with the result of the examination, the Ambassador turned to depart, when he beheld, close behind

him, a masked figure, which he immediately recognized as the same that had appeared at the window of his lodgings in the Bloody Tower, on the evening when Jane's death-warrant was signed by the Queen. No sound had proclaimed the mask's approach, and the door was shut. The sight revived all Renard's superstitious fears.

"Who and what art thou?" he demanded.

"Your executioner," replied a hollow voice. And suddenly drawing a poniard, the mask aimed a terrible blow at Renard, which, if he had not avoided it, must have proved fatal.

Thus assaulted, Renard tried to draw his sword, but he was prevented by the mask, who grappled with him, and brought him to the ground. In the struggle, however, the assassin's vizard fell off, and disclosed the features of Nightgall.

"Nightgall!" exclaimed Renard. "You, then, were the mysterious visitant to my chamber in the Bloody Tower. I might have guessed as much when I met you in the passage. But you persuaded me I had seen an apparition."

"If your Excellency took me for a ghost, I took you for something worse," replied Nightgall, keeping his knee upon the Ambassador's chest, and searching for his dagger, which had dropped in the conflict.

"Release me, villain!" cried Renard. "Would you murder me?"

"I am paid to put your Excellency to death," rejoined Nightgall, with the utmost coolness.

"I will give you twice the sum to spare me," rejoined Renard, who saw from Nightgall's looks that he had no chance, unless he could work upon his avarice.

"Hum!" exclaimed the jailer; who, not being able to reach his dagger, which had rolled to some distance, had drawn his sword, and was now shortening it, with intent to plunge it in the other's throat—"I would take your offer—but I have gone too far."

"Fear nothing," gasped Renard, giving himself up for lost. "I swear by my patron, St. Paul, that I will not harm a hair of your head. Against your employer only will I direct my vengeance."

"I will not trust you," replied Nightgall, about to strike.

But just as he was about to deal the fatal blow—at the very moment that the point of the blade pierced the Ambassador's skin, he was plucked backwards by Cholmondeley, and hurled on the ground. Perceiving it was his rival, who was more hateful to him even than Renard, Cholmondeley, on the onset, had prepared to take some part in the struggle, and noticing the poniard, had first of all possessed himself of it, and then attacked Nightgall in the manner above related

Throwing himself upon his foe, Cholmondeley tried to stab him; but it appeared that he wore a stout buff jerkin, for the weapon glanced aside without doing him any injury. As Cholmondeley was about to repeat the thrust, and in a part less defended, he was himself pushed aside by Renard, who by this time had gained his feet, and was threatening vengeance upon his intended assassin. But the esquire was unwilling to abandon his prey; and in the struggle, Nightgall, exerting all his strength, broke from them, and wresting the dagger from Cholmondeley, succeeded in opening the door. Renard, foaming with rage, rushed after him, utterly forgetful of Cholmondeley, who listened with breathless anxiety to their retreating footsteps. Scarcely knowing what to do, but resolved not to throw away the chance of escape, the esquire hastily attired himself, and taking up a lamp which Renard had left upon the floor, quitted the cell.

"I will seek out Cicely," he cried, "and set her free; and then, perhaps, we may be able to escape together."

But the hope that for a moment arose within his breast was checked by the danger and difficulty of making the search. Determined, however, to hazard the attempt, he set out in a contrary direction to that taken by

Nightgall and Renard, and proceeding at a rapid pace soon reached a flight of steps, up which he mounted. He was now within a second passage, similar to the first, with cells on either side; but though he was too well convinced, from the sounds issuing from them, that they were occupied, he did not dare to open any of them. Still pursuing his headlong course, he now took one turn —now another, until he was completely bewildered and exhausted. While leaning against the wall to recruit himself, he was startled by a light approaching at a distance, and fearing to encounter the person who bore it, was about to hurry away, when, to his inexpressible joy, he perceived it was Cicely. With a wild cry, he started towards her, calling to her by name; but the young damsel, mistaking him probably for her persecutor, let fall her lamp, uttered a piercing scream, and fled. In vain her lover strove to overtake her—in vain he shouted to her, and implored her to stop—his cries were drowned in her shrieks, and only added to her terror. Cholmondeley, however, though distanced, kept her for some time in view; when all at once she disappeared.

On gaining the spot where she had vanished, he found an open trap-door, and, certain she must have descended by it, took the same course. He found himself in a narrow, vaulted passage, but could discover no traces of her he sought. Hurrying forward, though almost ready to drop with fatigue, he came to a large octagonal chamber. At one side he perceived a ladder, and at the head of it the arched entrance to a cell. In an agony of hope and fear he hastened towards the recess, and as he approached, his doubt was made certainty by a loud scream. Quick as thought, he sprang into the cell, and found, crouched in the farther corner, the object of his search.

"Cicely," he exclaimed, "it is I—your lover—Cholmondeley."

"You!" she exclaimed, starting up, and gazing at him as if she could scarcely trust the evidence of her senses;

"and I have been flying from you all this time, taking you for Nightgall." And throwing herself into his arms, she was strained passionately to his bosom.

After the first rapturous emotions had subsided, Cicely hastily explained to her lover that after she had been borne away by Nightgall she had fainted, and on reviving found herself in her accustomed prison. Filled with alarm by his dreadful threats, she had determined to put an end to her existence rather than expose herself to his violence; and had arisen with that resolution, when an impulse prompted her to try the door. To her surprise it was unfastened—the bolt having shot wide of the socket, and quitting the cell, she had wandered about along the passages, until they had so mysteriously encountered each other. This explanation given, and Cholmondeley having related what had befallen him, the youthful pair, almost blinded to their perilous situation by their joy at their unexpected reunion, set forth in the hope of discovering the subterranean passage to the farther side of the moat.

Too much engrossed by each other to heed whither they were going, they wandered on; Cicely detailing all the persecution she had experienced from Nightgall, and her lover breathing vengeance against him. The only person she had seen, she said, during her captivity was Xit. He had found his way to her dungeon, but was discovered while endeavoring to liberate her by Nightgall, who threatened to put him to death if he did not take a solemn oath, which he proposed, not to reveal the place of her captivity. And she concluded the dwarf had kept his vow, as she had seen nothing of him since; nor had any one been led to her retreat.

To these details, as well as to her professions of love for him, unshaken by time or circumstance, Cholmondeley listened with such absorbing attention, that, lost to everything else, he tracked passage after passage, unconscious where he was going. At last he opened a door which admitted them to a gloomy hall, terminated by a broad

flight of steps, down which several armed figures were descending. Cholmondeley would have retreated, but it was impossible. He had been perceived by the soldiers, who rushed towards him, questioned him and Cicely, and not being satisfied with their answers, conveyed them up the stairs to the lower guard-room in the White Tower, which it appeared the wanderers had approached.

Here, amongst other soldiers and warders, were the three giants, and instantly addressing them, Cholmondeley delivered Cicely to their care. He would have had them convey her to the Stone Kitchen, but this an officer who was present would not permit, till inquiries had been made, and meanwhile the esquire was placed in arrest.

Shortly after this an extraordinary bustle was heard at the door, and four soldiers entered carrying the body of a man upon a shutter. They set it down in the midst of the room. Amongst those who flocked round to gaze upon it, was Cholmondeley. It was a frightful spectacle. But in the mutilated, though still breathing mass the esquire recognized Nightgall. While he was gazing at the miserable wretch, and marvelling how he came in this condition, a tall personage strode into the room, and commanding the group to stand aside, approached the body. It was Renard. After regarding the dying man for a few moments with savage satisfaction, he turned to depart, when his eye fell upon Cholmondeley.

"I had forgotten you," he said. "But it seems you have not neglected the opportunity offered you of escape."

"We caught him trying to get out of the subterranean passages, your Excellency," remarked the officer.

"Let him remain here till further orders," rejoined Renard. "You have saved my life, and shall find I am not ungrateful," he added to Cholmondeley.

"If your Excellency would indeed requite me," replied the esquire, "you will give orders that this maiden, long and falsely imprisoned by the wretch before us, may be allowed to return to her friends."

"I know her," rejoined Renard, looking at Cicely; "and I know that what you say is true. Release her," he added to the officer. And giving a last terrible look at Nightgall, he quitted the room.

"Is Cicely here?" groaned the dying man.

"She is," replied Cholmondeley. "Have you ought to say to her?"

"Ay, and to you, too," replied Nightgall. "Let her approach, and bid the others stand off; and I will confess all I have done. Give me a draught of wine, for it is a long story, and I must have strength to tell it."

Before relating Nightgall's confession, it will be necessary to see what dreadful accident had befallen him; and in order to do this, his course must be traced subsequently to his flight from Cholmondeley's dungeon.

Acquainted with all the intricacies of the passages, and running with great speed, Nightgall soon distanced his pursuer, who having lost trace of him, was obliged to give up the chase. Determined, however, not to be balked of his prey, he retraced his steps to the torture-chamber, where he found Wolfytt, Sorrocold, and three other officials, to whom he recounted the jailer's atrocious attempt.

"I will engage to find him for your Excellency," said Wolfytt, who bore no very kindly feeling to Nightgall, "if he is anywhere below the Tower. I know every turn and hole in these passages better than the oldest rat that haunts them."

"Deliver him to my vengeance," rejoined Renard, "and you shall hold his place."

"Says your Excellency so!" cried Wolfytt; "then you may account him already in your hands."

With this, he snatched up a halberd and a torch, and bidding two of the officials come with him, started off at a swift pace on the right. Neither he nor his companions relaxed their pace, but tracked passage after passage, and examined vault after vault, but still without success.

Renard's impatience manifested itself in furious excla-

mations, and Wolfytt appeared perplexed and disappointed.

"I have it!" he exclaimed, rubbing his shaggy head. "He must have entered St. John's Chapel, in the White Tower, by the secret passage."

The party were again in motion; and taking the least circuitous road, Wolfytt soon brought them to a narrow passage, at the end of which he descried a dark crouching figure.

"We have him!" he cried exultingly. "There he is!"

Creeping quickly along, for the roof was so low that he was compelled to stoop, Wolfytt prepared for an encounter with Nightgall. The latter grasped his dagger, and appeared ready to spring upon his assailant. Knowing the strength and ferocity of the jailer, Wolfytt hesitated a moment, but goaded on by Renard, who was close behind, and eager for vengeance, he was about to commence the attack, when Nightgall, taking advantage of the delay, touched a spring in the wall behind him, and a stone dropping from its place, he dashed through the aperture. With a yell of rage and disappointment, Wolfytt sprang after him, and was instantly struck down by a blow from his opponent's dagger. Renard followed, and beheld the fugitive speeding across the nave of St. John's Chapel, and without regarding Wolfytt, who was lying on the floor bleeding profusely, he continued the pursuit.

Nightgall hurried up the steps behind the altar, and took his way along one of the arched stone galleries opening upon the council-chamber. But, swiftly as he fled, Renard, to whom fury had lent wings, rapidly gained upon him.

It was more than at hour after daybreak, but no one was astir in this part of the citadel, and as the pursued and pursuer threaded the gallery, and crossed the council-chamber, they did not meet even a solitary attendant. Nightgall was now within the southern gallery of the White Tower, and Renard shouted to him to stop; but he heeded not the cry. In another moment he reached a

THE FATE OF NIGHTGALL

door opening upon the north-east turret. It was bolted, and the time lost in unfastening it brought Renard close upon him. Nightgall would have descended, but thinking he heard voices below, he ran up the winding stairs

Renard now felt secure of him, and uttered a shout of savage delight. The fugitive would have gained the roof, if he had not been intercepted by a party of men who, at the very moment he reached the doorway communicating with the leads, presented themselves at it. Hearing the clamor raised by Renard and his followers below, these men commanded Nightgall to surrender. Instead of complying, the miserable fugitive, now at his wits' end, rushed backwards, with the determination of assailing Renard. He met the ambassador at a turn in the stairs a little below, and aimed a desperate blow at him with his dagger. But Renard easily warded it off, and pressing him backwards, drove him into one of the deep embrasures at the side.

Driven to desperation, Nightgall at first thought of springing through the loophole; but the involuntary glance that he cast below made him recoil. On seeing his terror, Renard was filled with delight, and determined to prolong his enjoyment. In vain Nightgall endeavored to escape from the dreadful snare in which he was caught. He was driven remorselessly back. In vain he implored mercy in the most abject terms. None was shown him. Getting within the embrasure, which was about twelve feet deep, Renard deliberately pricked the wretched man with the point of his sword, and forced him slowly backwards.

Nightgall struggled desperately against the horrible fate that awaited him, striking at Renard with his dagger, clutching convulsively against the wall, and disputing the ground inch by inch. But all was unavailing. Scarcely a foot's space intervened between him and destruction, when Renard sprang forward, and pushed him by main force through the loophole. He uttered a fearful cry, and

tried to grasp at the roughened surface of the wall. Renard watched his descent. It was from a height of near ninety feet.

He fell with a terrific smash upon the pavement of the court below. Three or four halberdiers, who were passing at a little distance, hearing the noise, ran towards him, but finding he was not dead, though almost dashed in pieces, and scarcely retaining a vestige of humanity, they brought a shutter, and conveyed him to the lower guard-room, as already related.

"I have no hope of mercy," gasped the dying man, as his request was complied with, and Cicely, with averted eyes, stood beside him, "and I deserve none. But I will make what atonement I can for my evil deeds. Listen to me, Cicely (or rather I should say Angela, for that is your rightful name), you are the daughter of Sir Alberic Mountjoy, and were born while your parents were imprisoned in the Tower. Your mother, the Lady Grace, lost her reason on the day of her husband's execution, as I have before stated. But she did not expire as I gave out. My motive for setting on foot this story, and for keeping her existence secret, was the hope of making her mine if she recovered her senses, as I had reason to believe would be the case."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Cholmondeley.

"You cannot upbraid me more than I now upbraid myself," groaned Nightgall; "but my purpose was thwarted. The ill-fated lady never recovered, and disappointment, acting upon my evil nature, made me treat her with such cruelty that her senses became more unsettled than ever."

"Alas! alas!" cried Cicely, bursting into tears; "my poor mother! what a fate was yours!"

"When all hope of her recovery was extinguished," continued Nightgall, "I thought that, if any change occurred in the sovereignty or religion of the country, I might, by producing her, and relating a feigned story, obtain a handsome reward for her preservation. But this

expectation also passed by. And I must confess that, at length, my only motive for allowing her to exist was that she formed an object to exercise my cruelty upon."

"Heaven's curse upon you!" cried Cholmondeley.

"Spare your maledictions," rejoined Nightgall; "or heap them on my lifeless clay. You will soon be sufficiently avenged. Give me another draught of wine, for my lips are so dry I can scarcely speak, and I would not willingly expire till I have made known the sum of my wickedness."

The wine given him, he proceeded.

"I will not tell you all the devilish cruelties I practised upon the wretched Alexia (for so, as you are aware, I called her, to conceal her real name), because from what you have seen you may guess the rest. But I kept her a solitary captive in those secret dungeons for a term of nearly seventeen years—ever since your birth, in short," he added, to Cicely. "Sometimes she would elude my vigilance, and run shrieking along the passages. But when any of the jailers beheld her, they fled, supposing her a supernatural being."

"Her shrieks were indeed dreadful," remarked Cholmondeley. "I shall never forget their effect upon me. But you allowed her to perish from famine at last?"

"Her death was accidental," replied Nightgall, in a hollow voice, "though it lies as heavy on my soul as if I had designed it. I had shut her up for security in the cell in the Devilin Tower, where you found her, meaning to visit her at night, as was my custom, with provisions. But I was sent on special business by the Queen to the palace at Greenwich for three days; and on my return to the Tower, I found the wretched captive dead."

"She had escaped you, then," said Cholmondeley bitterly. "But you have not spoken of her daughter?"

"First, let me tell you where I have hidden the body, that decent burial may be given it," groaned Nightgall. "It lies in the vault beneath the Devilin Tower—in the centre of the chamber—not deep—not deep."

"I shall not forget," replied Cholmondeley, noticing with alarm that an awful change had taken place in his countenance. "What of her child?"

"I must be brief," replied Nightgall faintly, "for I feel that my end approaches. The little Angela was conveyed by me to Dame Potentia Trusbut. I said she was the offspring of a lady of rank, but revealed no name, and what I told beside was a mere fable. The good dame, having no child of her own, readily adopted her, and named her Cicely. She grew up in years—in beauty; and as I beheld her dawning charms, the love I had entertained for the mother was transferred to the child—nay, it was ten times stronger. I endeavored to gain her affections, and fancied I should succeed, till you"—looking at Cholmondeley—"appeared. Then I saw my suit was hopeless. Then evil feelings again took possession of me, and I began a fresh career of crime. You know the rest."

"I do," replied Cholmondeley.

"Have you aught further to disclose?"

"Only this," rejoined Nightgall, who was evidently on the verge of dissolution, "cut open my doublet and within its folds you will find proofs of Angela's birth, together with other papers referring to her ill-fated parents. Lay them before the Queen; and I make no doubt that the estates of her father, who was a firm adherent to the Catholic faith, and died for it, as well as a stanch supporter of Queen Catherine of Arragon, will be restored to her."

Cholmondeley lost not a moment in obeying the injunction. He cut open the blood-stained jerkin of the dying man, and found, as he had stated, a packet.

"That is it," cried Nightgall, fixing his glazing eyes on Angela, "that will restore you to your wealth—your title. The priest by whom you were baptized was the Queen's confessor, Feckenham. He will remember the circumstance—he was the ghostly counsellor of both

your parents. Take the packet to him and he will plead your cause with the Queen. Forget—forgive me——"

His utterance was suddenly choked by a stream of blood that gushed from his mouth, and with a hideous expression of pain he expired.

"Horrible!" cried Angela, placing her hands before her eyes.

"Think not of him," said Cholmondeley, supporting her, and removing her to a little distance,—"think of the misery you have escaped—of the rank to which you will assuredly be restored. When I first beheld those proud and beautiful lineaments, I was certain they belonged to one of high birth. And I was not mistaken."

"What matters my newly-discovered birth—my title—my estates, if I obtain them—if *you* are lost to me!" cried Angela despairing. "I shall never know happiness without you."

As she spoke, an usher, who had entered the guard-room, marched up to Cholmondeley, and said, "I am the bearer of the Queen's pardon to you. Your life is spared, at the instance of the Spanish Ambassador. But you are to remain a prisoner on parole, within the fortress, during the royal pleasure."

"It is now my turn to support you," said Angela, observing her lover stagger, and turn deadly pale.

"So many events crowd upon my brain," cried Cholmondeley, "that I begin to fear for my reason—Air!—air!"

Led into the open court, he speedily recovered, and in a transport of such joy as has seldom been experienced, he accompanied Angela to the Stone Kitchen, where they were greeted with mingled tears and rejoicings by Dame Potentia and her spouse.

In the course of the day, Cholmondeley sought out Feckenham, and laid the papers before him. The confessor confirmed all that Nightgall had stated respecting the baptism of the infant daughter of Lady Mountjoy, and

the other documents satisfied him that the so-called Cicely was that daughter. He undertook to lay the case at once before the Queen, and was as good as his word. Mary heard his statement with the deepest interest, but made no remark; and at its conclusion desired that the damsel might be brought before her.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOW JANE WAS IMPRISONED IN THE MARTIN TOWER; HOW SHE WAS VISITED BY ROGER ASCHAM; HOW SHE RECEIVED FECKENHAM'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE TIME OF HER EXECUTION WAS FIXED; AND HOW SHE WAS RESPITED FOR THREE DAYS.

The Martin Tower (or, as it is now termed, the Jewel Tower, from the purpose to which it is appropriated), where Jane was confined by the Queen's commands, lies at the north-eastern extremity of the ballium wall, and corresponds in size and structure with the Devilin, or Devereux Tower, at the opposite angle. Circular in form, like the last-mentioned building, and erected, in all probability, at the same period—the latter end of the reign of John, or the commencement of that of Henry the Third—it consists of two stories, having walls of immense thickness, and containing, as is the case with every other fortification, deep recesses, terminated by narrow loopholes. A winding stone staircase, still in a tolerable state of preservation, communicates with these stories, and with the roof, which was formerly embattled, and defended on either side by two small square turrets. Externally, on the west, the Martin Tower has lost its original character; the walls being new-fronted and modernized, and a flight of steps raised to the upper story, completely masking the ancient doorway, which now forms the entrance to the jewel-room. On the east, however, it re-

tains much of its ancient appearance, though in part concealed by surrounding habitations; and when the building now in progress, and intended for the reception of the regalia, is completed, it will be still hidden.[1] While digging the foundations of the proposed structure, which were sunk much below the level of the ballium wall, it became apparent that the ground had been artificially raised to a considerable height by an embankment of gravel and sand; and the prodigious solidity and strength of the wall were proved from the difficulty experienced by the workmen in breaking through it, to effect a communication with the new erection.

Within, on the basement floor, on the left of the passage, and generally hidden by the massive portal, is a small cell constructed in the thickness of the wall; and farther on, the gloomy chamber used as a depository for the crown ornaments, and which requires to be artificially lighted, is noticeable for its architecture, having a vaulted and groined roof of great beauty. The upper story, part of the residence of Mr. Swift, the keeper of the regalia, at present comprehends two apartments, with a hall leading to them, while the ceiling having been lowered, other rooms are gained. Here, besides the ill-fated and illustrious lady whose history forms the subject of this chronicle, was confined the lovely, and perhaps guiltless, Anne Boleyn. The latter fact has, however, been doubted, and the upper chamber in the Beauchamp Tower assigned as the place of her imprisonment. But this supposition, from many circumstances, appears improbable, and the inscription bearing her name, and carved near the entrance of the hall, is conclusive as to her having been confined in this tower.

Here, in 1641, the twelve bishops, impeached of high

[1] The view of this fabric, at page 440, was taken from the spot cleared out for the erection of the New Jewel Rooms; and as the latter structure is already in a state of forwardness, and will be probably finished before Christmas, this aspect of the old tower can scarcely be said to exist longer.

treason by the revolutionary party in the House of Commons, for protesting against the force used against them, and the acts done in their absence, were imprisoned during their committal to the Tower:—at least, so runs the legend, though it is difficult to conceive how so many persons could be accommodated in so small a place. Here, also, Blood made his atrocious attempt (a story still involved in obscurity—it has been conjectured, with some show of probability, that he was prompted to the deed by Charles himself) to steal the crown jewels; and in this very chamber the venerable Talbot Edwards made his gallant defence of the royal ensigns, receiving for his bravery and his wounds a paltry grant of two hundred pounds, half of which, owing to vexatious delays, he only received, while the baffled robber was rewarded with a post at court, and a pension of five hundred pounds a year in Ireland. Can it be doubted after this which of the two was the offender in the eyes of the monarch?

It must not be omitted that the Jewel Tower enjoys, in common with its corresponding fortification, the Devereux Tower, the reputation of being haunted. Its ghostly visitant is a female figure robed in white—whether the spirit of Anne Boleyn, or the ill-fated Jane, cannot be precisely ascertained.

The Martin Tower acquired its present designation of the Jewel Tower in the reign of James the First, when the crown ornaments were removed to it from a small building, where they had been hitherto kept, on the south side of the White Tower. The regalia were first exhibited to the public in the reign of Charles the Second, when many of the perquisites of the ancient master of the Jewel House were abolished, and its privileges annexed to the office of the Lord Chamberlain.

Jane's present prison was far more commodious than her former place of confinement in the Brick Tower, and, by Mary's express injunctions, every attention consistent with her situation was shown her. Strange as it may seem, she felt easier, if not happier, than she had done

during the later part of the period of her liberation. Then, she was dissatisfied with herself, anxious for her husband, certain of the failure of his enterprise, and almost desiring its failure,—now, the worst was past. No longer agitated by the affairs of the world, she could suffer with patience, and devote herself wholly to God. Alone within her prison-chamber, she prayed with more fervor than she had been able to do for months; and the soothing effect it produced was such, that she felt almost grateful for her chastening. "I am better able to bear misfortune than prosperity," she murmured, "and I cannot be too thankful to Heaven that I am placed in a situation to call forth my strength. Oh that Dudley may be able to endure his trial with equal fortitude!—But I fear his proud heart will rebel. Sustain him, Lord! I beseech Thee, and bring him to a true sense of his condition."

Convinced that her days were now numbered, having no hope of pardon, scarcely desiring it, and determined to reject it, if coupled with any conditions affecting her faith, Jane made every preparation for her end. No longer giving up a portion of her time to study, she entirely occupied herself with her devotions. Influenced by the controversial spirit of the times, she had before been as anxious to overcome her opponents in argument, as they were to convince her of her errors. Now, though feeling equally strong in her cause, she was more lowly-minded. Reproaching herself bitterly with her departure from her duty, she sought by incessant prayer, by nightly vigil, by earnest and heartfelt supplication to wipe out the offence. "I have not sinned in ignorance," she thought, "but with my eyes open, and therefore my fault is far greater than if no light had been vouchsafed me. By sincere contrition alone can I hope to work out my salvation; and if sorrow, remorse, and shame, combined with the most earnest desire of amendment, constitute repentance, I am truly contrite. But I feel my own unworthiness, and though I know the mercy of Heaven is infinite, yet I scarcely dare to hope for forgiveness for my trespasses. I have trusted

too much to myself already, and find that I relied on a broken reed. I will now trust only to God."

And thus she passed her time, in the strictest self-examination, fixing her thoughts above, and withdrawing them as much as possible from earth. The effect was speedily manifest in her altered looks and demeanor. When first brought to the Martin Tower, she was downcast and despairing. Ere three days had passed she became calm, and almost cheerful, and her features resumed their wonted serene and seraphic expression. She could not, it is true, deaden the pangs that ever and anon shook her when she thought of her husband and father. But she strove to console herself by the hope that they would be purified, like herself, by the trial to which they were subjected, and that their time of separation would be brief. To the Duke she addressed that touching letter preserved among the few fragments of her writings, which after it had been submitted to Gardiner, was allowed to be delivered to him. It concluded with these words: "And thus, good father, I have opened unto you the state wherein I presently stand—my death at hand. Although to you it may seem woeful, yet to me there is nothing that can be more welcome than to aspire from this Vale of Misery to that heavenly throne of all joy and pleasure with Christ, my Saviour. In whose steadfast faith (if it may be lawful for the daughter so to write to the father) the Lord who hath hitherto strengthened you so continue to keep you, that at the last we may meet in heaven."

With her husband she was allowed no communication; and in reply to her request to see him once more, she was told that their sole meeting would be on the scaffold:—a wanton insult, for it was not intended to execute them together. The room, or rooms (for the large circular chamber was even then divided by a partition) occupied by Jane in the Martin Tower, were those on the upper story, tenanted, as before mentioned, by the keeper of the regalia, and her chief place of resort during the daytime

was one of the deep embrasures looking towards the north. In this recess, wholly unobserved and undisturbed, she remained, while light lasted, upon her knees, with a book of prayers, or the Bible before her, fearful of losing one of the precious moments which flew by so quickly—and now so tranquilly. At night she withdrew, not to repose, but to a small table in the midst of the apartment, on which she placed the sacred volume and a lamp, and knelt down beside it. Had she not feared to disturb her calm condition, she would not have allowed herself more than an hour's repose, at the longest intervals nature could endure. But desirous of maintaining her composure to the last she yielded to the demand, and from midnight to the third hour stretched herself upon her couch. She then arose, and resumed her devotions. The same rules were observed in respect to the food she permitted herself to take. Restricting herself to bread and water, she ate and drank sufficient to support nature, and no more.

On the fourth day after her confinement, the jailer informed her there was a person without who had an order from the Queen to see her. Though Jane would have gladly refused admittance to the applicant, she answered meekly, "Let him come in."

Immediately afterwards a grave-looking middle-aged man, with a studious countenance overclouded with sorrow, appeared. He was attired in a black robe, and carried a flat velvet cap in his hand.

"What, Master Roger Ascham, my old instructor!" exclaimed Jane, rising as he approached, and extending her hand to him, "I am glad to see you."

Ascham was deeply affected. The tears rushed to his eyes, and it was some moments before he could speak.

"Do not lament for me, good friend," said Jane in a cheerful tone, "but rejoice with me, that I have so profited by your instructions as to be able to bear my present lot with resignation."

"I do indeed heartily rejoice at it, honored and dear madam," replied Ascham, subduing his emotion, "and I

would gladly persuade myself that my instructions had contributed in however slight a degree to your present composure. But you derive your fortitude from a higher source than any on earth. It is your piety, not your wisdom that sustain you; and though I have pointed out the way to the living waters at which you have drunk, it is to that fountain alone that you owe the inestimable blessing of your present frame of mind. I came not hither to depress, but to cheer you—not to instruct, but be instructed. Your life, madam, will afford the world one of the noblest lessons it has ever received, and though your career may be closed at the point whence most others start, it will have been run long enough."

"Alas! good Master Ascham," rejoined Jane, "I once thought that my life and its close would be profitable to our Church—that my conduct might haply be a model to its disciples—and my name enrolled among its martyrs. Let him who standeth take heed lest he fall. I had too much confidence in myself. I yielded to impulses, which, though not culpable in the eyes of men, were so in those of God."

"O madam! you reproach yourself far too severely," cried Ascham. "Unhappy circumstances have made you amenable to the laws of your country, it is true, and you give up your life as a willing sacrifice to justice. But this is all that can, or will be required of you, by your earthly or your Supreme Judge. That your character might have been more absolutely faultless in the highest sense I will not deny, had you sacrificed every earthly feeling to duty. But I for one should not have admired —should not have loved you as I now love you, had you acted otherwise. What you consider a fault has proved you a true woman in heart and affection; and your constancy as a believer in the Gospel, and upholder of its doctrines, has been equally strongly manifested. Your name in after ages will be a beacon and a guiding-star to the whole Protestant Church."

"Heaven grant it!" exclaimed Jane fervently. "I once hoped—once thought so."

"Hope so—think so still," rejoined Ascham. "Ah, dear madam, when I last took my leave of you before my departure for Germany, and found you in your chamber at Bradgate, buried in the Phædo of the divine philosopher, while your noble father and his friends were hunting, and disporting themselves in the park—when to my wondering question, as to why you did not join in their pastime, you answered, 'that all their sport in the park was but a shadow to the pleasure you found in Plato'—adding, 'alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant'—at that time I little thought for what a sad, though proud destiny you were reserved."

"Neither did I, good Master Ascham," replied Jane; "but you now find me at a better study. I have exchanged him whom you term, and truly, in a certain sense, the 'divine' philosopher, for writings derived from the highest source of inspiration—direct from heaven—and I find in this study more pleasure and far more profit than the other. And now farewell, good friend. Do me one last favor. Be present at my ending. And see how she, whom you have taught to live, will die. Heaven bless you!"

"Heaven bless you too, noble and dear lady," replied Ascham, kneeling and pressing her hand to his lips. "I will obey your wishes."

He then arose, and covering his face to hide his fast-falling tears, withdrew.

Jane, also, was much moved, for she was greatly attached to her old instructor; and to subdue her emotion, took a few turns within her chamber. In doing this, she noticed the various inscriptions and devices carved by former occupants; and taking a pin, traced with its point the following lines on the wall of the recess where she performed her devotions:—

Non aliena putes homini quæ obtingere possunt;
Sors hodierna mihi, cras erit illa tibi.

Underneath, she added the following, and subscribed them with her name :—

Deo juvante, nil nocet livor malus ;
Et non juvante, nil juvat labor gravis :
Post tenebras, spero lucem !

The lines have been effaced. But tradition has preserved them. How deeply affecting is the wish of the patient sufferer—"*Post tenebras, spero lucem !*"

Scarcely had Jane resumed her devotions, when she was a second time interrupted by the jailer, who, ushering a young female into the room, departed. Jane arose, and fixed her eyes upon the new-comer, but did not appear to recognize her ; while the latter, unable to restrain her tears, tottered towards her, and threw herself at her feet.

"Do you not know me, dearest madam ?" she cried, in a voice suffocated by emotion.

"Can it be Cicely ?" inquired Jane eagerly. "The tones are hers."

"It is—it is," sobbed the other.

Jane instantly raised her, and pressed her affectionately to her bosom.

"Poor child !" she exclaimed, gazing at her pale and emaciated features, now bedewed with tears, "you are as much altered as I am,—nay, more. You must have suffered greatly to rob you of your youth and beauty thus. But I should have known you at once, despite the change, had I not thought you dead. By what extraordinary chance do I behold you here ?"

As soon as she could command herself, Angela related all that had befallen her since their last sad parting. She told how she had been betrayed into the hands of Nightgall by one of his associates, who came to Sion House with a forged order for her arrest,—carried her off, and delivered her to the jailer. How she was conveyed by the subterranean passage from Tower Hill to the secret dungeons beneath the fortress,—how she was removed from one cell to another by her inexorable captor, and

what she endured from his importunities, threats, and cruel treatment,—and how at last, when she had abandoned all hope of succor, Providence had unexpectedly and mysteriously interposed to release her, and punish her persecutor. She likewise recounted the extraordinary discovery of her birth—Nightgall's confession—Cholmondeley's interview with Feckenham—and concluded her narration thus: "The confessor having informed me that her Majesty desired I should be brought before her, I yesterday obeyed the mandate. She received me most graciously—ordered me to relate my story—listened to it with profound attention—and expressed great sympathy with my misfortunes. 'Your sufferings are at an end, I trust,' she said, when I had finished, 'and brighter and happier days are in store for you. The title and estates of which you have been so long and so unjustly deprived shall be restored to you. Were it for your happiness, I would place you near my person; but a life of retirement, if I guess your disposition rightly, will suit you best.' In this I entirely agreed, and thanking her Majesty for her kindness, she replied: 'You owe me no thanks, Angela. The daughter of Sir Alberic Mountjoy—my mother's trusty friend—has the strongest claims upon my gratitude. Your lover has already received a pardon, and when these unhappy affairs are ended, he shall be at liberty to quit the Tower. May you be happy with him!'"

"I echo that wish with all my heart, dear Angela," cried Jane. "May Heaven bless your union!—and it *will* bless it, I am assured, for you deserve happiness. Nor am I less rejoiced at your deliverance than at Cholmondeley's. I looked upon myself as in some degree the cause of his destruction, and unceasingly reproached myself with having allowed him to accompany me to the Tower. But now I find—as I have ever found in my severest afflictions—that all was for the best."

"Alas! madam," returned Angela, "when I see you here, I can with difficulty respond to the sentiment."

"Do not question the purposes of the Unquestionable, Angela," replied Jane severely. "I am chastened because I deserve it, and for my own good. The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, and fortitude is given me to bear my afflictions. Nay, they are *not* afflictions. I would not exchange my lot—sad as it seems to you—for that of the happiest and the freest within the realm. When the bondage of earth is once broken—when the flesh has no more power over the spirit—when the gates of heaven are open for admittance—can the world, or worldly joys, possess further charms? No. These prison walls are no restraint to me. My soul soars upwards, and holds communion with God and with His elect, among whom I hope to be numbered. The scaffold will have no terror for me. I shall mount it as the first step towards heaven; and shall hail the stroke of the axe as the signal to my spirit to wing its flight to the throne of everlasting joy!"

"I am rebuked, madam," returned Angela, with a look of admiration. "Oh that I might ever hope to obtain such a frame of mind."

"You may do so, dear Angela," replied Jane, "but your lot is cast differently from mine. What is required from me is not required from you. Such strong devotional feelings have been implanted in my breast for a wise purpose, that they usurp the place of all other, and fit me for my high calling. The earnest and hearty believer in the Gospel will gladly embrace death, even if accompanied by the severest tortures, at seasons perilous to his Church, in the conviction that it will be profitable to it. Such have been the deaths of the martyrs of our religion—such shall be my death."

"Amen!" exclaimed Angela fervently.

"Must we part now?" inquired Jane.

"Not unless you desire it," replied Angela. "I have obtained the Queen's permission to remain with you to the last."

"I thank her for the boon," returned Jane. "It will

be a great consolation to me to have you near me. Angela, you must not shrink from the last duty of a friend—you must accompany me to the scaffold. I may need you there."

"I will shrink from nothing you enjoin, madam," replied Angela, shuddering. "But I had rather—far rather—suffer in your stead."

Jane made no reply, but pressed her hand affectionately.

"I have omitted to tell you, madam," continued Angela, "that the Queen, before I was dismissed from the presence, urged me to embrace the faith of Rome—that of my father, who perished for his adherence to it—and to use my endeavors to induce you to become reconciled with that Church."

"And what answer did you make?" demanded Jane sternly.

"Such as you yourself would have made, madam," replied Angela—"I refused both."

"It is well," rejoined Jane. "And now I must return to my devotions. You will have a weary office in attending me, Angela. Nor shall I be able to address more than a few words to you—and those but seldom."

"Think not of me, madam," replied the other; "all I desire is to be near you, and to join my prayers with yours."

Both then knelt down, and both prayed long and fervently. It would have been a touching sight to see those young and beautiful creatures with eyes upturned to heaven—hands clasped—and lips murmuring prayer. But the zeal that animated Jane far surpassed that of her companion. Long before the former sought her couch, fatigue overcame the latter, and she was compelled to retire to rest; and when she arose (though it was not yet daybreak), she found the unwearying devotee had already been up for hours. And so some days were spent—Jane ever praying—Angela praying too, but more frequently engaged in watching her companion.

On the morning of Thursday, the 8th of February, the

jailer appeared, with a countenance of unusual gloom, and informed his captive that the lieutenant of the Tower and Father Feckenham were without, and desired to see her.

"Admit them," replied Jane. "I know their errand. You are right welcome, sirs," she added, with a cheerful look, as they entered. "You bring me good news."

"Alas! madam," replied Feckenham sorrowfully, "we are the bearers of ill tidings. It is our melancholy office to acquaint you that your execution is appointed for to-morrow."

"Why, that *is* good news," returned Jane, with an unaltered countenance. "I have long and anxiously expected my release, and am glad to find it so near at hand."

"I am further charged, by the Queen's Highness, who desires not to kill the soul as well as the body," pursued Feckenham, "to entreat you to use the few hours remaining to you in making your peace with heaven."

"I will strive to do so, sir," replied Jane meekly.

"Do not mistake me, madam," rejoined Feckenham earnestly. "Her Majesty's hope is that you will reconcile yourself with the Holy Catholic Church, by which means you can alone insure your salvation. For this end, she has desired me to continue near you to the last, and to use my best efforts for your conversion—and by God's grace I will do so."

"You may spare yourself the labor, sir," replied Jane. "You will more easily overturn these solid walls by your arguments than my resolution."

"At least suffer me to make the attempt," replied Feckenham. "That I have hitherto failed in convincing you is true, and I may fail now, but my very zeal must satisfy you that I have your welfare at heart, and am eager to deliver you from the bondage of Satan."

"I have never doubted your zeal, sir," returned Jane; "nor—and I say it in all humility—do I doubt my own power to refute your arguments. But I must decline the contest now, because my time is short, and I would devote every moment to the service of God."

"That excuse shall not avail you, madam," rejoined Feckenham significantly. "The Queen and the Chancellor are as anxious as I am for your conversion, and nothing shall be left undone to accomplish it."

"I must submit, then," replied Jane, with a look of resignation. "But I repeat, you will lose your labor."

"Time will show," returned Feckenham.

"I have not yet dared to ask a question which has risen to my lips, but found no utterance," said Jane, in an altered tone. "My husband!—what of him?"

"His execution will take place at the same time with your own," replied Feckenham.

"I shall see him to-morrow, then?" cried Jane.

"Perhaps before," returned Feckenham.

"It were better not," said Jane, trembling. "I know not whether I can support the interview."

"I was right," muttered Feckenham to himself. "The way to move her is through the affections." And he made a sign to the lieutenant, who quitted the chamber.

"Prepare yourself, madam," he added to Jane.

"For what?" she cried.

"For your husband's approach. He is here."

As he spoke the door was opened, and Dudley rushed forward, and caught her in his arms. Not a word was uttered for some moments by the afflicted pair. Angela withdrew, weeping as if her heart would break, into one of the recesses, and Feckenham and the lieutenant into another. After the lapse of a short time, thinking it a favorable opportunity for his purpose, the confessor came forward. Jane and her husband were still locked in each other's embrace, and it seemed as if nothing but force could tear them asunder.

"I would not disturb you," said Feckenham, "but my orders are that this interview must be brief. I am empowered also to state, madam," he added to Jane, "that her Majesty will even now pardon your husband, notwithstanding his heinous offences against her, provided you are publicly reconciled with the Church of Rome."

"I cannot do it, Dudley," cried Jane, in a voice of agony—"I cannot—cannot."

"Neither do I desire it," he replied. "I would not purchase life on such terms. We will die together."

"Be it so," observed Feckenham, with a disconcerted look. "The offer will never be repeated."

"It would never had been made at all if there had been a chance of its acceptance," returned Dudley coldly. "Tell your royal mistress that I love my wife too well to require such a sacrifice at her hands, and that she loves me too well to make it."

"Dudley," exclaimed Jane, gazing at him with tearful eyes, "I can now die without a pang."

"Have you aught more to say to each other?" demanded Feckenham. "You will meet no more on earth!"

"Yes, on the scaffold," cried Jane.

"Not so," replied Feckenham gloomily. "Lord Guilford Dudley will suffer on Tower Hill—you, madam, will meet your sentence on the Green before the White Tower, where Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard perished."

"We shall meet in the grave, then," rejoined Dudley bitterly, "where Mary's tyranny can neither reach us, nor the voice of juggling priest disturb us more."

"Your prisoner," cried Feckenham, turning angrily to the lieutenant.

"Farewell, dear Dudley," exclaimed Jane, straining him to her bosom—"be constant."

"As yourself," he replied, gently disengaging himself from her. "I am ready, sir," he added to Brydges. And without hazarding another look at Jane, who fell back in the arms of Angela, he quitted the chamber.

Half-an-hour after this, when Jane had in some degree recovered from the shock, Feckenham returned, and informed her that he had obtained from the Queen a reprieve for herself and her husband for three days. "You can now no longer allege the shortness of the time allowed you, as a reason for declining a conference with me," he said; "and I pray you address yourself earnestly to

the subject, for I will not desist till I have convinced and converted you."

"Then I shall have little of the time allotted me to myself," replied Jane. "But I will not repine. My troubles may benefit others—if not myself."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH AND COURTENAY WERE DELIVERED OUT OF THE TOWER TO FURTHER DURANCE; AND HOW QUEEN MARY WAS WEDDED, BY PROXY, TO PHILIP OF SPAIN.

Elizabeth still continued a close prisoner in the Bell Tower. But she indulged the most sanguine expectations of a speedy release. Her affections had received a severe blow in Courtenay's relinquishment of his pretensions to her hand, and it required all her pride and mastery over herself to bear up against it. She did, however, succeed in conquering her feelings, and with her usual impetuosity began now to hate him in the proportion of her former love. While his mistress was thus brooding over the past, and trying to regulate her conduct for the future within the narrow walls of her prison, Courtenay, who had been removed to the Flint Tower, where he was confined in the basement chamber, was likewise occupied in revolving his brief and troubled career. A captive from his youth, he had enjoyed a few months' liberty, during which visions of glory, power, greatness, and love—such as have seldom visited the most exalted—opened upon him. The bright dream was now ended, and he was once more a captive. Slight as his experience had been, he was sickened of the intrigues and hollowness of court life, and sighed for freedom and retirement. Elizabeth still retained absolute possession of his heart, but he feared to espouse her, because he was firmly persuaded that her haughty and ambitious character would

involve him in perpetual troubles. Cost what it might, he determined to resign her hand as his sole hope of future tranquillity. In this resolution he was confirmed by Gardiner, who visited him in secret, and counselled him as to the best course to pursue.

"If you claim my promise," observed the crafty Chancellor, "I will fulfil it, and procure you the hand of the Princess, but I warn you you will not hold it long. Another rebellion will follow, in which you and Elizabeth will infallibly be mixed up, and then nothing will save you from the block."

Courtenay acquiesced, and Gardiner having gained his point, left him with the warmest assurances that he would watch over his safety. Insincere as he was, the Chancellor was well disposed towards Courtenay, but he had a difficult game to play. He was met on all hands by Renard, who was bent on the Earl's destruction and that of the Princess; and every move he made with the Queen was checked by his wary and subtle antagonist. Notwithstanding her belief in their treasonable practices, Mary was inclined to pardon the offenders, but Renard entreated her to suspend her judgment upon them till the Emperor's opinion could be ascertained. This, he well knew, if agreed to, would insure their ruin, as he had written secretly in such terms to Charles the Fifth as he was satisfied would accomplish his object. Extraordinary despatch was used by the messengers; and to Renard's infinite delight, while he and Gardiner were struggling for ascendency over the Queen, a courier arrived from Madrid. Renard's joy was converted into positive triumph as he opened his own letters received by the same hand, and found that the Emperor acquiesced in the expediency of the severest measures towards Elizabeth and her suitor, and recommended their immediate execution. The same despatches informed him that Charles, apprehensive of some further difficulty in respect to his son's projected union with Mary, had written to the Count D'Egmont at Brussels, with letters of ratification and procuration, com-

missioning him to repair to the court of London without delay, and conclude the engagement by espousing the Queen by Proxy.

Not many hours later, the Count himself, who had set out instantly from Brussels on receiving his commission, arrived. He was received on the Queen's part by the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Comptroller of the Household, and the Marquis of Winchester, High Treasurer, and conducted to the state apartments within the Palace of the Tower, where the court was then staying. Mary appointed an audience with him on the following day, and in the interim, to Renard's disappointment, remained closeted with Gardiner, and would see no one beside. The Ambassador, however, consoled himself with the certainty of success, and passed the evening in consultation with D'Egmont, to whom he detailed all that had passed since the flight of the latter.

"The heretical faction in England," he observed, "is entirely crushed—or will be so, when Jane and Elizabeth are executed. And if his Highness Prince Philip will follow up my measures, he may not only restore the old faith throughout the realm, but establish the Inquisition in the heart of London within six months."

The next day, at the appointed hour, the Count D'Egmont, attended by Renard and the whole of his suite, was conducted with much ceremony to the council-chamber in the White Tower. He found Mary surrounded by the whole of her ministers, and prostrating himself before the throne, acquainted her with his mission, and, presenting her with the letters of procuration he had received from the Prince, entreated her to ratify on her side the articles already agreed upon. To this request, for which she was already prepared by the Emperor's despatches, Mary vouchsafed a gracious answer, saying: "I am as impatient for the completion of the contract as the Prince your master can be, and shall not hesitate a moment to comply with his wishes. But I would," she added, smiling, "that he had come to claim its fulfilment himself."

"His Highness only awaits your Majesty's summons, and an assurance that he can land upon your shores without occasioning further tumult," rejoined D'Egmont.

"He shall speedily receive that assurance," returned Mary. "Heaven be praised! our troubles are ended, and the spirit of disaffection and sedition checked, if not altogether extinguished. But I pray you hold me excused for a short time," she continued, motioning him to rise; I have some needful business to conclude before I proceed with this solemnity."

Waving her hand to Sir Thomas Brydges who stood among the group of nobles near the throne, he immediately quitted the presence, returning in a few moments with a guard of halberdiers, in the midst of which were Elizabeth and Courtenay. At the approach of the prisoners the assemblage divided into two lines, to allow them passage; and, preceded by the lieutenant, they advanced to within a short distance of the Queen.

Mary, meantime, had seated herself; and her countenance, hitherto radiant with smiles, assumed a severe expression. A mournful silence pervaded the courtly throng, and all seemed as ominous and lowering as if a thundercloud had settled over them. This was not, however, the case with Renard. A sinister smile lighted up his features, and he observed in an undertone to D'Egmont, "My hour of triumph is at hand."

"Wait awhile," replied the other.

Elizabeth looked in no wise abashed or dismayed by the position in which she found herself. Throwing angry and imperious glances around, and bending her brows on those who scanned her too curiously, she turned her back upon Courtenay, and seemed utterly unconscious of his presence.

At the Queen's command Gardiner stepped forward, and taking a roll of paper from an attendant, proceeded to read the charges against the prisoners, together with the depositions of those who had been examined, as to their share in the insurrection. When he concluded

Elizabeth observed in a haughty tone, "There is nothing in all that to touch me, my lord. Wyat has recanted his confession, and avowed he was suborned by Renard. And as to the rest of my accusers, they are unworthy of credit. The Queen's Highness must acquit me"

"What say you, my lord?" demanded Gardiner of Courtenay."

"Nothing," replied the Earl.

"Do you confess yourself guilty of the high crimes and misdemeanors laid to your charge, then?" pursued the Chancellor.

"No," answered Courtenay firmly. "But I will not seek to defend myself further. I throw myself on the Queen's mercy."

"You do wisely, my lord," returned Gardiner; "and your Grace," he added to Elizabeth, "would do well to abate your pride, and imitate his example."

"In my father's time, my lord," observed the Princess scornfully, "you would not, for your head, have dared to hold such language towards me."

"I dared to plead your mother's cause with him," retorted Gardiner with much asperity. "Your Majesty will now pronounce such sentence upon the accused as may seem meet to you," he added, turning to the Queen.

"We hold their guilt not clearly proven," replied Mary. "Nevertheless, too many suspicious circumstances appear against them to allow us to set them at large till all chance of further trouble is ended. Not desiring to deal harshly with them, we shall not confine them longer within the Tower. Which of you, my lords, will take charge of the Princess Elizabeth? It will be no slight responsibility. You will answer for her security with your heads. Which of you will take charge of her, I say?"

As she spoke she glanced inquiringly round the assemblage, but no answer was returned.

"Had not your Highness better send her Grace under a sure guard to the Emperor's court at Brussels?" observed

Renard, who could scarcely conceal his mortification at the Queen's decision.

"I will think of it," returned Mary.

"Sooner than this shall be," interposed Sir Henry Bedingfeld, "since none worthier of the office can be found, I will undertake it."

"You are my good genius, Bedingfeld," replied Mary. "To you, then, I confide her, and I will associate with you in the office Sir JohnWilliams of Thame. The place of her confinement shall be my palace at Woodstock, and she will remain there till you receive futher orders. You will set out with a sufficient guard for Oxfordshire."

"I am ever ready to obey your Highness," replied Bedingfeld.

"Accursed meddler!" exclaimed Renard to D'Egmont, he has marred my project."

"The Earl of Devonshire will be confined in Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonsire," pursued Mary. "To you, Sir Thomas Tresham," she continued, addressing one of those near her, "I commit him."

"I am honored in the charge," returned Tresham, bowing.

"Your Majesty will repent this ill-judged clemency," cried Renard, unable to repress his choler; "and since my counsels are unheeded, I must pray your Highness to allow me to resign the post I hold near your person."

"Be it so," replied Mary in a freezing tone; "we accept your resignation—and shall pray his Imperial Majesty to recall you."

"Is this my reward?" exclaimed Renard, as he retired, covered with shame and confusion. "Cursed is he that puts faith in princes!"

The prisoners were then removed, and as they walked side by side, Courtenay sought to address the Princess, but she turned away her head sharply, according him neither look nor word in reply. Finding himself thus repulsed, the Earl desisted, and they proceeded in silence as long as their way lay together.

And thus, without one farewell, they parted—to meet no more. Liberated at the instance of Philip of Spain, Courtenay journeyed to Italy, where he died two years afterwards, at Padua, obtaining, as Holinshed touchingly remarks, "that quiet which in his life he could never have." Of the glorious destiny reserved for Elizabeth nothing need be said.

The prisoners removed, the Queen presented her hand to the Earl of Pembroke, and repaired with her whole retinue to St. John's Chapel.

Arrived there, Mary stationed herself at the altar, around which were grouped Bonner, Tunstal, Feckenham, and a host of other priests and choristers, in their full robes. In a short time the nave and aisles of the sacred structure were densely crowded by the lords of the council, together with other nobles and their attendants, the dames of honor, the guard, and the suite of the Count D'Egmont. Nor were the galleries above unoccupied, every available situation finding a tenant.

D'Egmont, as the representative of Philip of Spain, took up a position on the right of the Queen, and sustained his part with great dignity. As soon as Gardiner was prepared, the ceremonial commenced. D'Egmont tendered his hand to Mary, who took it, and they both knelt down upon the cushion before the altar, while the customary oaths were administered, and a solemn benediction pronounced over them. This done, they arose, and Gardiner observed to the Queen, in a voice audible throughout the structure: "Your Majesty is now wedded to the Prince of Spain. May God preserve you both, and bless your union!"

"God preserve Queen Mary!" cried the Earl of Pembroke, stepping forward.

And the shout was enthusiastically echoed by all within the chapel. But not a voice was raised nor a blessing invoked for her husband.

Te Deum was then sung by the choristers, and mass performed by Bonner and the priests.

"His Imperial Majesty entreats your acceptance of this slight offering," said D'Egmont, when the sacred rites were concluded, presenting the Queen with a diamond ring of inestimable value.

"I accept the gift," replied Mary, "and I beg you to offer my best thanks to the Emperor. For yourself, I hope you will wear this ornament in remembrance of me, and of the occasion." And detaching a collar of gold set with precious stones from her own neck, she placed it over that of D'Egmont.

"I now go to bring your husband, gracious madam," said the Count.

"Heaven grant you a safe and speedy journey!" replied Mary.

"And to your Highness a prosperous union!" rejoined the Count; "and may your race long occupy the throne." So saying, he bowed and departed.

D'Egmont's wish did not produce a cheering effect on Mary. Jane's words rushed to her mind, and she feared that her union would not be happy—would not be blessed with offspring. And it need scarcely be added, her forebodings were realized. Coldly treated by a haughty and neglectful husband, she went childless to the tomb.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE WEDDING OF SIR NARCISSUS LE GRAND WITH JANE THE FOOL, AND WHAT HAPPENED AT IT; AND OF THE ENTERTAINMENT GIVEN BY HIM ON THE OCCASION TO HIS OLD FRIENDS AT THE STONE KITCHEN.

Sir Narcissus le Grand made rapid strides in the royal favor, as well as in that of his mistress. He was now in constant attendance on the Queen, and his coxcombry afforded her so much amusement, that she gave him a post near her person, in order to enjoy it. Jane the Fool, too, who had a secret liking for him, though

she affected displeasure at Mary's command, became so violently enamored, and so excessively jealous, if the slightest attentions were paid him by the dames of honor, that the Queen thought it desirable to fix an early day for the wedding.

The happy event took place on Saturday, the 10th of February, at St. Peter's Chapel on the Green, and was honored by the presence of the Queen and all her attendants. Never were merrier nuptials witnessed ! And even the grave countenance of Feckenham, the officiating priest on the occasion, wore a smile, as the bridegroom, attired in his gayest habiliments, bedecked at all points with lace, tags, and fringe, curled, scented, and glistening with silver and gold, was borne into the chapel on the shoulders of Og—who had carried him from the By-ward Tower through a vast concourse of spectators—and deposited at the altar near the bride. Behind Og came his two brethren, together with Dames Placida and Potentia ; while Peter Trusbut, Ribald, and Winwike brought up the rear.

Arrived at the height of his ambition, graced with a title, favored by the Queen, and idolized by his bride, who was not altogether destitute of personal attractions, and was at least, twice his own size, the poor dwarf's brain was almost turned, and he had some difficulty in maintaining the decorous and dignified deportment which he felt it necessary to maintain on the occasion. The ceremony was soon performed—too soon for Sir Narcissus, who would willingly have prolonged it. The royal train departed—not, however, before Mary had bestowed a well-filled purse of gold upon the bridegroom, and commanded him to bring his friends to the palace, where a supper would be provided for them. Sir Narcissus then offered his hand to his bride, and led her forth, followed by his companions.

A vast crowd had collected before the doors of the sacred edifice. But a passage having been kept clear by a band of halberdiers for the Queen, the lines were un-

broken when the wedding-party appeared. Loud acclamations welcomed Sir Narcissus, who paused for a moment beneath the porch, and taking off his well-plumed cap, bowed repeatedly to the assemblage. Reiterated shouts and plaudits succeeded, and the clamor was so great from those who could not obtain a glimpse of him, that the little knight entreated Og to take him once more upon his shoulder. The request was immediately complied with; and when he was seen in this exalted situation, a deafening shout rent the skies. The applauses, however, were shared by his consort, who placed on the shoulder of Gog, became equally conspicuous.

In this way they were carried side by side along the Green, and Sir Narcissus was so enchanted that he desired the bearers to proceed as slowly as possible. His enthusiasm became at length so great, that when several of those around him jestingly cried, "Largesse, largesse! Sir Narcissus," he opened the purse lately given him by the Queen, and which hung at his girdle, and threw away the broad pieces in showers. "I will win more gold," he observed to Og, who remonstrated with him on his profusion; "but such a day as this does not occur twice in one's life."

"Happiness and long life attend you and your lovely dame, Sir Narcissus!" cried a bystander.

"There is not a knight in the Tower to be compared with you, worshipful sir!" roared another.

"You deserve the Queen's favor!" vociferated a third.

"Greater dignities are in store for you!" added a fourth.

Never was new-made and new-married knight so enchanted. Acknowledging all the compliments and fine speeches with smirks, smiles, and bows, he threw away fresh showers of gold. After making the complete circuit of the fortress, he crossed the drawbridge, and proceeded to the wharf, where he was hailed by different boats on the river; everywhere his reception was the same. On the return of the party, Hairun invited them all to the Lions' Tower, and ushering them to the gallery, brought

out several of the wild animals, and went through his performances as if the Queen herself had been present. In imitation of the sovereign, Sir Narcissus bestowed his last few coins, together with the purse containing them, upon the bearward. During the exhibition, the knight had entertained his consort with an account of his combat with old Max; and before quitting the menagerie he led her into the open space in front of the cages, that she might have a nearer view of the formidable animal.

"It will not be necessary to read you such a lesson, sweetheart, as my friend Magog read his dame," he observed. "But it is as well you should know I have resource in case of need."

"I shall not require to be brought to obedience by a bear, chuck," returned Lady le Grand, with a languishing look. "Your slightest word is law to me!"

"So she says now," observed Dame Potentia who happened to overhear the remark, to Dame Placida. "But let a week pass over their heads, and she will alter her tone."

"Perhaps so," sighed Placida. "But I have never had my own way since my encounter with old Max. Besides, these dwarfs are fiery fellows, and have twice the spirit of men of larger growth."

"There *is* something in that, it must be owned," rejoined Potentia reflectively.

Max, by Sir Narcissus's command, was let out of his cage, and when within a few yards of them, sat on his hind-legs, and opened his enormous jaws. At this sight Lady le Grand screamed, and took refuge behind her husband, who, bidding her fear nothing, drew his sword, and put himself in a posture of defence. Suppressing a laugh, Hairun informed the knight that Max only begged for something to eat; and sundry biscuits and apples being given him, he was driven back to his cage without any misadventure. Hairun then led the party to his lodging, where a collation was spread out for them, of which they partook. At its conclusion, Peter Trusbut

observed, that if Sir Narcissus and Lady le Grand would honor him with their company at the Stone Kitchen on the following night, he would use his best endeavors to prepare a supper worthy of them.

"It will give me infinite pleasure to sup with thee, worthy Peter," replied the knight, with a patronizing air; "but I must insist that the banquet be at my expense. Thou shalt cook it—I will pay for it."

"As you please, worshipful sir," rejoined Trusbut. "But I can have what I please from the royal larder."

"So much the better," returned Sir Narcissus. "But mine the entertainment shall be. And I here invite you all to it."

"My best endeavors shall be used to content your worship," replied the pantler. "We have had some good suppers in the Stone Kitchen ere now, but this shall exceed them all."

"It is well," replied the knight. "Hairun, you had better bring your monkey to divert us."

"Right willingly, worshipful sir," replied the bearward; "and if you have a cast-off suit of clothes to spare, I will deck him in them for the occasion."

"You will find my last suit at the By-ward Tower," replied Sir Narcissus. "Og will give them to you; and you may, if you choose, confer upon him the name I have cast off with them."

"I will not fail to adopt your worship's suggestion." returned Hairun, smothering a laugh. "Henceforth I shall call my ape Xit, and who knows whether in due season he may not attain the dignity of knighthood?"

Sir Narcissus did not exactly relish this remark, which made many of the guests smile; but he thought it better not to notice it, and taking a courteous leave of the hospitable bearward, proceeded to the Palace, where a lodging was now given him, and where he passed the remainder of the day with his friends in jollity and carousing. Nor was it until the clock had chimed midnight that he was left alone with his spouse.

At what hour Sir Narcissus arose on the following morning does not appear. But at eight in the evening, attired as on the previous day, and accompanied by his dame in her wedding-dress, he repaired to the Stone Kitchen. He found the whole party assembled, including, besides those he had invited, Winwike and his son, a chubby youth of some ten years old, Mauger, Wolfytt, and Sorrocold. Sir Narcissus could have dispensed with the company of the three latter; but not desiring to quarrel with them, he put the best face he could upon the matter, and bade them heartily welcome. He found, too, that Hairun had literally obeyed his injunctions, and brought his monkey with him, dressed up in his old clothes.

"Allow me to present Xit, the ape, to your worship," said the bearward.

"He is welcome," replied Sir Narcissus, laughing, to conceal his vexation at the absurd resemblance which the animal bore to him.

Sir Narcissus was then conducted to a seat at the head of the table. On the right was placed his lady, on the left, Dame Placida; while the pantler, who, as usual, filled the office of carver, faced him. The giants were separated by the other guests, and Ribald sat between Dames Placida and Potentia, both of whom he contrived to keep in most excellent humor. Peter Trusbut did not assert too much when he declared that the entertainment should surpass all that had previously been given in the Stone Kitchen; and not to be behindhand, the giants exceeded all their former efforts in the eating line. They did not, it is true, trouble themselves much with the first course, which consisted of various kinds of pottage and fish; though Og spoke in terms of rapturous commendation of a sturgeon's jowl, and Magog consumed the best part of a pickled tunny-fish. But when these were removed, and the more substantial viands appeared, they set to work in earnest. Turning up their noses at the boiled capons, roasted bustards, stewed quails and other

light matters, they, by one consent, assailed a large shield of brawn, and speedily demolished it. Their next incursion was upon a venison pasty—a soused pig followed—and while Gog prepared himself for a copious draught of Rhenish by a dish of anchovies, Magog, who had just emptied a huge two-handed flagon of bragget, sharpened his appetite—the edge of which was a little taken off—with a plate of pickled oysters. A fawn, roasted whole, with a pudding in its inside, now claimed their attention, and was pronounced delicious. Og then helped himself to a shoulder of mutton and olives; Gog to a couple of roasted ruffs; and Magog again revived his flagging powers with a dish of buttered crabs. At this juncture, the strong waters were introduced by the pantler, and proved highly acceptable to the laboring giants.

Peter Trusbut performed wonders. In the old terms of his art, he leached the brawn, reared the goose, sauced the capon, spoiled the fowls, flushed the chickens, unlaced the rabbits, winged the quails, minced the plovers, thighed the pigeons, bordered the venison pasty, tranched the sturgeon, undertranched the tunny-fish, tamed the crab, and barbed the lobster.

The triumphs of the repast now appeared. They were a baked swan, served in a coffin of rye-paste; a crane, likewise roasted whole; and a peacock, decorated with its tail. The first of these birds—to use his own terms—was reared by the pantler; the second displayed; and the last disfigured. And disfigured it was in more ways than one; for snatching the gaudy plumes from its tail, Sir Narcissus decorated his dame's cap with them. The discussion of these noble dishes fully occupied the giants, and when they had consumed a tolerable share of each, they declared they had done. Nor could they be tempted with the narrow toasts, the fritters, the puddings, the wafers, and other cates and sweetmeats that followed,—though they did not display the like objection to the brimming cups of hippocras which wound up the repast.

The only person who appeared to want appetite for

the feast, or who, perhaps, was too busy to eat, was Sir Narcissus. For the first time in his life he played the part of host, and he acquitted himself to admiration. Ever and anon, rising in his chair, with a goblet of wine in his hand, he would pledge some guest, or call out to Peter Trusbut to fill some empty plate. He had a jest for every one;—abundance of well-turned compliments for the ladies; and the tenderest glances and whispers for his dame, who looked more lovesick and devoted than ever. By the time the cloth was removed, and the dishes replaced by flagons and pots of hydromel and wine, Sir Narcissus was in the height of his glory. The wine had got a little into his head, but not more than added to his exhilaration, and he listened with rapturous delight to the speech made by Og, who in good set terms proposed his health and that of his bride. The pledge was drunk with the utmost enthusiasm; and in the heat of his excitement, Sir Narcissus mounted on the table, and bowing all round, returned thanks in the choicest phrases he could summon. His speech received several interruptions from the applauses of his guests; and Hairun, who was bent upon mischief, thought this a favorable opportunity for practising it. During the banquet, he had kept the monkey in the background, but he now placed him on the table behind Sir Narcissus, whose gestures and posture the animal began to mimic. Its grimaces were so absurd and extraordinary, that the company roared with laughter, to the infinite astonishment of the speaker, who at the moment was indulging in a pathetic regret at the necessity he should be under of quitting his old haunts in consequence of his new dignities and duties; but his surprise was changed to anger, as he felt his sword suddenly twitched from the sheath, and beheld the grinning countenance of the ape close behind him. Uttering an exclamation of fury, he turned with the intention of sacrificing the cause of his annoyance on the spot; but the animal was too quick for him, and springing on his shoulders, plucked off his cap, and twisted its

fingers in his well-curled hair, lugging him tremendously. Screaming with pain and rage, Sir Narcissus ran round the table, upsetting all in his course, but unable to free himself from his tormentor, who, keeping fast hold of his head, grinned and chattered as if in mockery of his vociferations.

Lady le Grand had not noticed the monkey's first proceedings, her attention being diverted by Ribald, who pressed her, with many compliments upon her charms, to take a goblet of malmsey which he had poured out for her. But she no sooner perceived what was going forward, than she flew to the rescue, beat off the monkey, and hugging her little lord to her bosom, almost smothered him with kisses and caresses. Nor were Dames Placida and Potentia less attentive to him. At first they had treated the matter as a joke, but seeing the diminutive knight was really alarmed, they rubbed his head, patted him on the back, embraced him as tenderly as Lady le Grand would permit, and loudly upbraided Hairun for his misconduct. Scarcely able to conceal his laughter, the offender pretended the utmost regret, and instantly sent off the monkey by one of the attendants to the Lions' Tower.

It was some time before Sir Narcissus could be fully appeased; and it required all the blandishments of the dames, and the humblest apologies from Hairun, to prevent him from quitting the party in high dudgeon. At length, however, he was persuaded by Magog to wash down his resentment in a bottle of sack, brewed by the pantler, and the generous drink restored him to instant good-humor. Called upon by the company to conclude his speech, he once more ventured upon the table, and declaiming bitterly against the interruption he had experienced, finished his oration amid the loudest cheers. He then bowed round in his most graceful manner, and returned to his chair.

It had already been stated that Mauger, Sorrocold, and Wolfytt were among the guests. The latter had pretty nearly recovered from the wound inflicted by Nightgall, which proved, on examination, by no means dangerous;

and, regardless of the consequences, he ate, drank, laughed, and shouted as lustily as the rest. The other two being of a more grave and saturnine character, seldom smiled at what was going forward; and though they did not neglect to fill their goblets, took no share in the general conversation, but sat apart in a corner near the chimney with Winwike, discussing the terrible scenes they had witnessed in their different capacities, with the true gusto of amateurs.

"And so Lady Jane Grey and her husband will positively be executed to-morrow?" observed Winwike. "There is no chance of further reprieve, I suppose?"

"None whatever," replied Mauger. "Father Feckenham, I understand, offered her two days more if she would prolong her disputation with him, but she refused No—no. There will be no further respite. She will suffer on the Green—her husband on Tower Hill."

"So I heard," replied Sorrocold—"Poor soul! she is very young—not seventeen, I am told."

"Poh—poh!" cried Mauger gruffly—"there's nothing in that. Life is as sweet at seventy as seventeen. However, I'll do my work as quickly as I can. If you wish to see a head cleanly taken off, get as near the scaffold as you can."

"I shall not fail to do so," returned Sorrocold. "I would not miss it for the world."

"As soon as the clock strikes twelve, and the Sabbath is ended," continued Mauger, "my assistants will begin to put up the scaffold. You know the spot before St. Peter's Chapel. They say the grass won't grow there. But that's an old woman's tale—ho! ho!"

"Old woman's tale, or not," rejoined Winwike gravely —"it's true. I've often examined the spot, and never could find a blade of herbage there."

"Well, well," rejoined Mauger, "I won't dispute the point. Believe it, and welcome. I could tell other strange tales concerning that place. It's a great privilege to be beheaded there, and only granted to illustrious

personages. The last two who fell there were Queen Catherine Howard, and her confidante, the Countess of Rochford. Lady Jane Grey would be beheaded on Tower Hill, with her husband, but they are afraid of the mob, who might compassionate the youthful pair, and occasion a riot. It's better to be on the safe side—ho! ho!"

"You said you had some other strange tales to tell concerning that place," observed Sorrocold. "What are they?"

"I don't much like talking about them," rejoined Mauger reluctantly, "but since I've dropped a hint on the subject, I may as well speak out. You must know, then, that the night before the execution of the old Countess of Salisbury, who would not lay her head upon the block, and whom I was obliged to chase round the scaffold and bring down how I could—the night before she fell—and a bright moonlight night it was—I was standing on the scaffold putting it in order for the morrow, when all at once there issued from the church porch a female figure, shrouded from head to foot in white."

"Well!" exclaimed Sorrocold breathlessly.

"Well," returned the headsman, "though filled with alarm, I never took my eyes from it, but watched it glide slowly round the scaffold, and finally return to the porch, where it disappeared."

"Did you address it?" asked Winwike.

"Not I," replied Mauger. "My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I could not have spoken to save my life."

"Strange!" exclaimed Sorrocold. "Did you ever see it again?"

"Yes, on the night before Catherine Howard's execution," replied Mauger; "and I have no doubt it will appear to-night."

"Do you think so?" cried Sorrocold. "I will watch for it."

"I shall visit the scaffold myself an hour after midnight," returned Mauger—"you can accompany me if you think proper."

"Agreed!" exclaimed the chirurgeon.

They were here interrupted by a boisterous roar of merriment from the other guests. While their sombre talk was going on, Ribald, who had made considerable progress in the good graces of Lady le Grand, had related a merry tale, and at its close, which was attended with shouts of laughter, Sir Narcissus ordered a fresh supply of wine, and the vast measures were promptly replenished by the pantler. Several pleasant hours were thus consumed, until at last Sir Narcissus arose, or rather attempted to rise, for his limbs refused their office, and his gaze was rather unsteady, and addressed his friends as follows: "Farewell, my merry gossips," he hiccuped—"farewell! As I am now a married man, I must keep go-o-o-d hours." (At this moment the clock struck twelve.) "I have already trespassed too much on Lady le Grand's good nature. She is getting sleepy. So, to speak truth, am I. I shall often visit you again—as often, at least, as my dignities and duties will permit. Do not stand in awe of my presence. I shall always unbend with you—always. The truly great are never proud—at least to their inferiors. With their superiors it is a different matter. This alone would convince you of my illustrious origin."

"True," cried Gog, "no one would suspect you of being the son of a groom of the pantry, for instance."

"No one," repeated Xit fiercely, and making an ineffectual attempt to draw his sword, "or if he *did* suspect it, he should never live to repeat it."

"Well, well," replied Gog meekly. "*I* don't suspect it."

"None of us suspect it," laughed Og.

"I am qu-quite sa-sa-satisfied," replied Sir Narcissus. "More wine, old Trusbut. Fill the pots, pantler. I'll give you a r-r-r-rousing pledge."

"And so will I," cried his dame, who, like her lord, was a little the worse for the wine she had swallowed—her goblet being kept constantly filled by the assiduous Ri-

bald—"so will I, if you don't come home directly, you little sot."

"Lady le Gr-r-and," cried Sir Narcissus furiously, "I'll divorce you. I'll behead you as Harry the Eighth did Anne Boleyn."

"No chuck, you won't," replied the lady. "You will think better of it to-morrow." So saying, she snatched him up in her arms, and despite his resistance, carried him off to his lodging in the palace, long before reaching which he had fallen asleep, and when he awoke next morning, he had but a very confused recollection of the events of the preceding night.

And here, as it will be necessary to take leave of our little friend, we will give a hasty glance at his subsequent history. Within a year of his union, a son was born to him, who speedily eclipsed his sire in stature, and in due season became a stalwart, well-proportioned man, six feet in height, and bearing a remarkable resemblance to Ribald. Sir Narcissus was exceedingly fond of him; and it was rather a droll sight to see them together. The dwarfish knight continued to rise in favor with the Queen, and might have been constantly with the court had he pleased, but as he preferred, from old habits and associations, residing within the Tower, he was allowed apartments in the palace, of which he was termed, in derision, the grand seneschal. On Elizabeth's accession, he was not removed, but retained his post till the middle of the reign of James the First, when he died full of years and honors—active, vain, and consequential to the last, and from his puny stature, always looking young. He was interred in front of St. Peter's Chapel on the Green, near his old friends the giants, who had preceded him some years to the land of shadows and the stone that marks his grave may still be seen.

As to the three gigantic warders, they retained their posts, and played their parts at many a feast and high solemnity during Elizabeth's golden rule, waxing in girth and bulk as they advanced in years, until they became

somewhat gross and unwieldy. Og, who had been long threatened with apoplexy, his head being almost buried in his enormous shoulders, expired suddenly in his chair after a feast; and his two brethren took his loss so much to heart, that they abstained altogether from the flask, and followed him in less than six months, dying, it was thought, of grief, but more probably of dropsy. Their resting-place has been already indicated. In the same spot, also, lie Lady le Grand, Dame Placida, and the worthy pantler and his spouse. Magog was a widower during the later part of his life, and, exhibited no anxiety to enter a second time into the holy state of matrimony. Og and Gog died unmarried.

CHAPTER XL.

OF THE VISION SEEN BY MAUGER AND SORROCOLD ON THE TOWER GREEN.

After the forcible abduction of Sir Narcissus by his spouse, the party broke up—Og and Gog shaping their course to the By-ward Tower, Magog and his spouse, together with Ribald, who had taken up his quarters with them, to their lodging on the hill leading to the Green, Hairun to the Lions' Tower, Winwike and his son to the Flint Tower, while Mauger, Wolfytt, and Sorrocold proceeded to the Cradle Tower. Unfastening his door, the headsman struck a light, and setting fire to a lamp, motioned the other to a bench, and placed a stone jar of strong waters before them, of which Wolfytt took a long deep pull, but the chirurgeon declined it.

"I have had enough," he said. "Besides, I want to see the spirit."

"I care for no other spirit but this," rejoined Wolfytt, again applying his mouth to the jar.

"Take care of yourselves, masters," observed Mauger. "I must attend to business."

"Never mind us," laughed Wolfytt, observing the executioner take up an axe, and after examining its edge, begin to sharpen it, "grind away."

"This is for Lord Guiford Dudley," remarked Mauger, as he turned the wheel with his foot. "I shall need two axes to-morrow."

"Sharp work," observed Wolfytt, with a detestable grin.

"You would think so were I to try one on you," retorted Mauger. "Ay, now it will do," he added, laying aside the implement, and taking up another. "This is my favorite axe. I can make sure work with it. I always keep it for queens or dames of high degree—ho! ho! This notch, which I can never grind away, was made by the old Countess of Salisbury, that I told you about. It was a terrible sight to see her white hair dabbled with blood. Poor Lady Jane won't give me so much trouble, I'll be sworn. She'll die like a lamb."

"Ay, ay," muttered Sorrocold. "God send her a speedy death!"

"She's sure of it with me," returned Mauger, "so you may rest easy on that score." And as he turned the grindstone quickly round, drawing sparks from the steel, he chanted, as hoarsely as a raven, the following ditty:—

"The axe was sharp, and heavy as lead,
As it touched the neck, off went the head!
Whir—whir—whir—whir!"

And the screaming of the grindstone formed an appropriate accompaniment to the melody.

"Queen Anne laid her white throat upon the block,
Quietly waiting the fatal shock;
The axe it severed it right in twain,
And so quick—so true—that she felt no pain!
Whir—whir—whir—whir!"

And he again set the wheel in motion.

"Salisbury's countess, she would not die
As a proud dame should—decorously.
Lifting my axe, I split her skull,
And the edge since then has been notched and dull.
Whir—whir—whir—whir!

"Queen Catherine Howard gave me a fee—
A chain of gold—to die easily:
And her costly present she did not rue,
For I touched her head, and away it flew!
Whir—whir—whir—whir!"

"A brave song, and well sung," cried Wolfytt, approvingly. Have you any more of it?"

"No," replied Mauger significantly. "I shall make another verse to-morrow. My axe is now as sharp as a razor," he added, feeling its edge. "Suppose we go to the scaffold? It must be up by this time."

"With all my heart," replied Sorrocold, whose superstitious curiosity was fully awakened.

Shouldering the heavy block with the greatest ease, Mauger directed Wolfytt to bring a bundle of straw from a heap in the corner, and extinguishing the lamp, set forth. It was a sharp, frosty night, and the hard ground rang beneath their footsteps. There was no moon, but the stars twinkled brightly down, revealing every object with sufficient distinctness. As they passed St. Thomas's Tower, Wolfytt laughingly pointed out Bret's head stuck upon a spike on the roof, and observed, "That poor fellow made Xit a knight."

On reaching the Green, they found Mauger's conjecture right—the scaffold was nearly finished. Two carpenters were at work upon it, nailing the planks to the posts, and the noise of their hammers resounded in sharp echoes from the surrounding habitations. Hurrying forward, Mauger ascended the steps, which were placed on the north, opposite St. Peter's Chapel, and deposited his burden on the platform. He was followed more leisurely by Sorrocold; and Wolfytt, throwing the straw upon the ground, scrambled after them as well as he could.

"If I had thought it was so cold, I would have taken another pull at the stone bottle," he said, rubbing his hands.

"Warm yourself by helping the carpenter," replied Sorrocold gravely. "It will do you more good."

Wolfytt laughed, and dropping on his knees, grasped the block with both hands, and placed his neck in the hallowed space.

"Shall I try whether I can take your head off?" demanded Mauger, feigning to draw his dagger.

Apprehensive that the jest might be carried a little too far, Wolfytt got up, and imitated, as well as his drunken condition would allow, the actions of a person addressing the multitude and preparing for execution. In bowing to receive the blessing of the priest, he missed his footing a second time, and rolled off the scaffold. He did not attempt to ascend again, but supported himself against one of the posts near the carpenters. Mauger and Sorrocold took no notice of him, but began to converse in an undertone about the apparition. In spite of himself, the executioner could not repress a feeling of dread, and the chirurgeon half-repented his curiosity.

After a while, neither spoke, and Sorrocold's teeth chattered, partly with cold, partly with terror. Nothing broke the deathlike silence around, except the noise of the hammer, and ever and anon a sullen and ominous roar proceeding from the direction of the Lions' Tower.

"Do you think it will appear?" inquired Sorrocold, whose blood ran cold at the latter awful sounds.

"I know not," replied Mauger—"Ah! there—there it is." And he pointed towards the church porch, from which a figure, robed in white, but unsubstantial almost as the mist, suddenly issued. It glided noiselessly along, and without turning its face towards the beholders. No one saw it except Mauger and Sorrocold, who followed its course with their eyes. The carpenters continued their work, and Wolfytt stared at his companions in stupid and inebriate wonderment. After making the complete

circuit of the scaffold, the figure entered the church porch and disappeared.

"What think you of it?" demanded Mauger, as soon as he could find utterance.

"It is marvellous and incomprehensible, and if I had not seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed it," replied the chirurgeon. "It must be the shade of Anne Boleyn. She is buried in that chapel."

"You are right," replied the executioner. "It is her spirit. There will be no further respite. Jane will die to-morrow."

CHAPTER XLI.

OF THE UNION OF CHOLMONDELEY WITH ANGELA.

The near approach of death found Jane as unshaken as before, or rather she rejoiced that her deliverance was at hand. Compelled to her infinite regret to hold a disputation with Feckenham, she exerted all her powers; and, as upon a former occasion, when opposed to a more formidable antagonist, Gardiner, came off victorious. But though defeated, the zealous confessor did not give up his point, trusting he should be able to weary her out. He accordingly passed the greater part of each day in her prison, and brought with him, at different times, Gardiner, Tunstal, Bonner, and other prelates, all of whom tried the effect of their reasoning upon her, but with no avail. Bonner, who was of a fierce and intolerant nature, was so enraged, that on taking leave of her he said with much acrimony, "Farewell, madam. I am sorry for you and your obstinacy, and I am assured we shall never meet again."

"True, my lord," replied Jane; "we never *shall* meet again, unless it shall please God to turn your heart. And I sincerely pray that He may send you His Holy Spirit, that your eyes may be opened to His truth."

Nor had the others better success. Aware that whatever she said would be reported to the disadvantage of the Protestant faith, if it could be so perverted, she determined to give them no handle for misrepresentation, and fought the good fight so gallantly that she lost not a single point, and wrung even from her enemies a reluctant admission of defeat. Those best skilled in all the subtleties of scholastic argument could not perplex her. United to the most profound learning, she possessed a clear logical understanding, enabling her at once to unravel and expose the mysteries in which they sought to perplex her, while the questions she proposed in her turn were unanswerable. At first she found Feckenham's visits irksome, but by degrees they became almost agreeable to her, because she felt she was at once serving the cause of the Gospel, and taking from her own thoughts. During all this time Angela never for a moment quitted her, and though she took no part in the conferences, she profited greatly by them.

Two days before she suffered, Jane said to Feckenham, "You have often expressed a wish to serve me, reverend sir. There is one favor you *can* confer upon me if you will."

"What is it, madam?" he rejoined.

"Before I die," returned Jane, "I would fain see Angela united to her lover, Cuthbert Cholmondeley. He was ever a faithful follower of my unfortunate husband, and he has exhibited a like devoted attachment to me. I know not whether you can confer this favor upon me, or whether you will do so if you can. But I venture, from your professions of regard for me, to ask it. If you consent, send, I pray you, to Master John Bradford, prebendary of St. Paul's, and let him perform the ceremony in this chamber."

"Bradford!" exclaimed Feckenham, frowning. "I know the obstinate and heretical preacher well. If you are willing that I should perform the ceremony, I will undertake to obtain the Queen's permission for it. But it must not be done by Bradford."

"Then I have nothing further to say," replied Jane.

"But how comes it that you, Angela," said Feckenham, addressing her in a severe tone, "the daughter of Catholic parents, both of whom suffered for their faith abandon it?"

"A better light has been vouchsafed me," she replied, "and I lament that they were not equally favored."

"Well, madam," observed Feckenham to Jane, "you shall not say I am harsh with you. I desire to serve Angela, for her parents' sake—both of whom were very dear to me, I will make known your request to the Queen, and I can almost promise it shall be granted on one condition."

"On no condition affecting my opinions," said Jane.

"Nay, madam," returned the confessor, with a half-smile, "I was about to propose nothing to which you can object. My condition is, that if Bradford is admitted to your prison, you exchange no word with him, except in reference to the object of his visit. That done, he must depart at onee."

"I readily agree to it," replied Jane, "and I thank you for your consideration."

After some further conference, Feckenham departed, and Angela, as soon as they were alone, warmly thanked Jane for her kindness, saying, "But why think of me at such a time?"

"Because it will be a satisfaction to me to know that you are united to the object of your affections," replied Jane. "And now leave me to my devotions, and prepare yourself for what is to happen."

With this, she withdrew into the recess, and, occupied in fervent prayer, soon abstracted herself from all else. Three hours afterwards, Feckenham returmed. He was accompanied by Cholmondeley, and a grave-looking divine in the habit of a minister of the Reformed Church, in whom Jane immediately recognized John Bradford, the uncompromising preacher of the Gospel, who not long afterwards won his crown of martyrdom at Smithfield. Apparently,

he knew why he was summoned, and the condition annexed to it, for he fixed an eye full of the deepest compassion and admiration upon Jane, but said nothing. Cholmondeley threw himself at her feet, and pressed her hand to his lips, but his utterance failed him. Jane raised him kindly and entreated him to command himself, saying, "I have not sent for you here to afflict you, but to make you happy."

"Alas! madam," replied Cholmondeley, "you are ever more thoughtful for others than yourself."

"Proceed with the ceremony without delay, sir," said Feckenham. "I rely upon your word, madam, that you hold no conference with him."

"You *may* rely upon it," returned Jane.

And the confessor withdrew.

Bradford then took from his vest a book of prayers, and in that prison-chamber, with Jane only as a witness, the ceremony was performed. At its conclusion, Angela observed to her husband—

"We must separate as soon as united, for I shall never quit my dear mistress during her lifetime."

"I should deeply regret it if you did otherwise," returned Cholmondeley. "Would I had like permission to attend on Lord Guilford! But that is denied me."

At the mention of her husband's name, a shade passed over Jane's countenance, but she instantly checked the emotion.

"My blessing upon your union!" she cried, extending her hands over the pair, "and may it be happy—happier than mine."

"Amen!" cried Bradford. "Before I take my leave, madam, I trust I shall not transgress the confessor's commands if I request you to write your name in this book of prayers. It will stimulate me in my devotions, and may perchance cheer me in a trial like your own."

Jane readily complied, and taking the book, wrote a short prayer in the blank leaf, and subscribed it with her name.

"This is but a slight return for your compliance with

my request, Master Bradford," she said, as she returned the book, "but it is all I have to offer."

"I shall prize it more than the richest gift," replied the preacher. "Farewell, madam, and doubt not I shall pray constantly for you."

"I thank you heartily, sir," she rejoined. "You must go with him, Cholmondeley," she continued, perceiving that the esquire lingered—"We must now part forever."

"Farewell, madam," cried Cholmondeley, again prostrating himself before her, and pressing her hand to his lips.

"Nay, Angela, you must lead him forth," observed Jane kindly, though a tear started to her eye. And she withdrew into an embrasure, while Cholmondeley, utterly unable to control his distress, rushed forth, and was followed by Bradford.

Jane's benediction did not fall to the ground. When the tragic event, which it is the purpose of this chronicle to relate, was over, Angela fell into a dangerous illness, during which her husband watched over her with the greatest solicitude. Long before her recovery, he had been liberated by Mary and, as soon as she was fully restored to health, they retired to his family seat in Cheshire, where they passed many years of uninterrupted happiness, saddened—but not painfully—by the recollection of the past.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE EXECUTION OF LADY JANE GREY.

Monday, the 12th of February, 1554, the fatal day destined to terminate Jane's earthly sufferings, at length arrived. Excepting a couple of hours which she allowed to rest, at the urgent entreaty of her companion, she had passed the whole of the night in prayer. Angela kept watch over the lovely sleeper, and the effect produced by the contemplation of her features during this her last slumber, was never afterwards effaced. The repose of an

infant could not be more calm and holy. A celestial smile irradiated her countenance; her lips moved as if in prayer; and if good angels are ever permitted to visit the dreams of those they love on earth, they hovered that night over the couch of Jane. Thinking it cruelty to disturb her from such a blissful state, Angela let an hour pass beyond the appointed time. But observing a change come over her countenance, seeing her bosom heave, and tears gather beneath her eyelashes, she touched her, and Jane instantly arose.

"Is it four o'clock?" she inquired.

"It has just struck five, madam," replied Angela. "I have disobeyed you for the first and last time. But you seemed so happy, that I could not find in my heart to waken you."

"I *was* happy," replied Jane, "for I dreamed that all was over—without pain to me—and that my soul was borne to regions of celestial bliss by a troop of angels who had hovered above the scaffold."

"It will be so, madam," replied Angela fervently. "You will quit this earth immediately for heaven, where you will rejoin your husband in everlasting happiness."

"I trust so," replied Jane, in an altered tone, "but in that blessed place I searched in vain for him. Angela, you let me sleep too long, or not long enough."

"Your pardon, dearest madam," cried the other fearfully.

"Nay, you have given me no offence," returned Jane kindly. "What I meant was that I had not time to find my husband."

"Oh you *will* find him, dearest madam," returned Angela, "doubt it not. Your prayers would wash out his offences, even if his own could not."

"I trust so," replied Jane. "And I will now pray for him, and do you pray too."

Jane then retired to the recess, and in the gloom—for it was yet dark—continued her devotions until the clock struck seven. She then arose, and assisted by Angela, attired herself with great care.

"I pay more attention to the decoration of my body now I am about to part with it," she observed, "than I would do if it was to serve me longer. So joyful is the occasion to me that were I to consult my own feelings, I would put on my richest apparel to indicate my contentment of heart. I will not, however, so brave my fate, but array myself in these weeds." And she put on a gown of black velvet, without ornament of any kind; tying round her slender throat (so soon alas! to be severed) a simple white falling collar. Her hair was left purposely unbraided, and was confined by a caul of black velvet. As Angela performed those sad services, she sobbed audibly.

"Nay, cheer thee, child," observed Jane. "When I was clothed in the robes of royalty, and had the crown placed upon my brow—nay, when arrayed on my wedding-day—I felt not half so joyful as now."

"Ah, madam," exclaimed Angela, in a paroxysm of grief, "my condition is more pitiable than yours. You go to certain happiness. But I lose you."

"Only for a while, dear Angela," returned Jane. "Comfort yourself with that thought. Let my fate be a warning to you. Be not dazzled by ambition. Had I not once yielded, I had never thus perished. Discharge your duty strictly to your eternal and your temporal rulers, and rest assured we shall meet again—never to part."

"Your counsel shall be graven on my heart, madam," returned Angela. "And oh, may my end be as happy as yours!"

"Heaven grant it!" ejaculated Jane fervently. "And now," she added, as her toilette was ended, "I am ready to die."

"Will you not take some refreshment, madam?" asked Angela.

"No," replied Jane. "I have done with the body."

The morning was damp and dark. A thaw came on a little before daybreak, and a drizzling shower of rain fell.

This was succeeded by a thick mist, and the whole of the fortress was for a while enveloped in vapor. It brought to Jane's mind the day on which she was taken to trial. But a moral gloom likewise overspread the fortress. Every one within it, save her few enemies (and they were few indeed), lamented Jane's approaching fate. Her youth, her innocence, her piety, touched the sternest breast, and moved the pity even of her persecutors. All felt that morning as if some dire calamity were at hand, and instead of looking forward to the execution as an exciting spectacle (for so such revolting exhibitions were then considered), they wished it over. Many a prayer was breathed for the speedy release of the sufferer—many a sigh heaved—many a groan uttered: and if ever soul was wafted to heaven by the fervent wishes of those on earth, Jane's was so.

It was late before there were any signs of stir and bustle within the fortress. Even the soldiers gathered together reluctantly—and those who conversed, spoke in whispers. Dudley, who it has been stated was imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower, had passed the greater part of the night in devotion. But towards morning he became restless and uneasy, and unable to compose himself, resorted to the customary employment of captives in such cases, and with a nail which he had found, carved his wife's name in two places on the walls of his prison. These inscriptions still remain.

At nine o'clock the bell of the chapel began to toll, and an escort of halberdiers and arquebusiers drew up before the Beauchamp Tower, while Sir Thomas Brydges and Feckenham entered the chamber of the prisoner, who received them with an unmoved countenance.

"Before you set out upon a journey from which you will never return, my lord," said Feckenham, "I would ask you for the last time if any change has taken place in your religious sentiments, and whether you are yet alive to the welfare of your soul?"

"Why not promise me pardon if I will recant on the

scaffold, and silence me as you silenced the Duke my father, by the axe!" replied Dudley sternly. "No, sir, I will have naught to do with your false and idolatrous creed. I shall die a firm believer in the Gospel, and trust to be saved by it."

"Then perish, body and soul," replied Feckenham harshly. "Sir Thomas Brydges, I commit him to your hands."

"Am I to be allowed no parting with my wife?" demanded Dudley anxiously.

"You have parted with her forever, heretic and unbeliever!" rejoined Feckenham.

"That speech will haunt your deathbed, sir," retorted Dudley sternly. And he turned to the lieutenant, and signified that he was ready.

"The first object that met Dudley's gaze as he issued from his prison was the scaffold on the Green. He looked at it for a moment wistfully.

"It is for Lady Jane," observed the lieutenant.

"I know it," replied Dudley, in a voice of intense emotion. "I thank you for letting me die first."

"You must thank the Queen, my lord," returned Brydges. "It was her order."

"Shall you see my wife, sir?" demanded Dudley anxiously.

The lieutenant answered in the affirmative.

"Tell her I will be with her on the scaffold," said Dudley.

As he was about to set forward, a young man pushed through the lines of halberdiers, and threw himself at his feet. It was Cholmondeley. Dudley instantly raised and embraced him. "At least I see one whom I love," he cried.

"My lord, this interruption must not be," observed the lieutenant. "If you do not retire," he added to Cholmondeley, "I shall place you in arrest."

"Farewell, my dear lord," cried the weeping esquire—"farewell!"

"Farewell, forever!" returned Dudley, as Cholmondeley was forced back by the guard.

The escort then moved forward, and the lieutenant accompanied the prisoner to the gateway of the Middle Tower, where he delivered him to the sheriffs and their officers, who were waiting there for him with a Franciscan friar, and then returned to fulfil his more painful duty. A vast crowd was collected on Tower Hill, and the strongest commiseration was expressed for Dudley as he was led to the scaffold, on which Mauger had already taken his station.

On quitting the Beauchamp Tower, Feckenham proceeded to Jane's prison. He found her on her knees, but she immediately arose.

"Is it time?" she asked.

"It is, madam,—to repent," replied Feckenham sternly. "A few minutes are all that now remain to you of life—nay, at this moment, perhaps, your husband is called before his Eternal Judge. There is yet time. Do not perish like him in your sins."

"Heaven have mercy upon him!" cried Jane, falling on her knees.

And notwithstanding the importunities of the confessor, she continued in fervent prayer till the appearance of Sir Thomas Brydges. She instantly understood why he came, and rising, prepared for departure. Almost blinded by tears, Angela rendered her the last services she required. This done, the lieutenant, who was likewise greatly affected, begged some slight remembrance of her.

"I have nothing to give you but this book of prayers, sir," she answered, "but you shall have that when I have done with it, and may it profit you."

"You will receive it only to cast it into the flames, my son," remarked Feckenham.

"On the contrary, I shall treasure it like a priceless gem," replied Brydges.

"You will find a prayer written in it in my own hand," said Jane. "And again I say, may it profit you."

Brydges then passed through the door, and Jane followed him. A band of halberdiers were without. At the sight of her a deep and general sympathy was manifested; not an eye was dry, and tears trickled down cheeks unaccustomed to such moisture. The melancholy train proceeded at a slow pace. Jane fixed her eyes upon the prayer-book, which she read aloud to drown the importunities of the confessor, who walked on her right, while Angela kept near her on the other side. And so they reached the Green.

By this time the fog had cleared off, and the rain had ceased; but the atmosphere was humid, and the day lowering and gloomy. Very few spectators were assembled—for it required firm nerves to witness such a tragedy. A flock of carrion-crows and ravens, attracted by their fearful instinct, wheeled around overhead, or settled on the branches of the bare and leafless trees, and by their croaking added to the dismal character of the scene. The bell continued tolling all the time.

The sole person upon the scaffold was Wolfytt. He was occupied in scattering straw near the block. Among the bystanders was Sorrocold leaning on his staff; and as Jane for a moment raised her eyes as she passed along, she perceived Roger Ascham. Her old preceptor had obeyed her, and she repaid him with a look of gratitude.

By the lieutenant's directions she was conducted for a short time into the Beauchamp Tower, and here Feckenham continued his persecutions, until a deep groan arose among those without, and an officer abruptly entered the room.

"Madam," said Sir John Brydges, after the new-comer had delivered his message, "we must set forth."

Jane made a motion of assent, and the party issued from the Beauchamp Tower, in front of which a band of halberdiers was drawn up. A wide open space was kept clear around the scaffold. Jane seemed unconscious of all that was passing. Preceded by the lieutenant, who took his way towards the north of the scaffold, and

attended on either side by Feckenham and Angela as before, she kept her eyes steadily fixed on her prayer-book.

Arrived within a short distance of the fatal spot, she was startled by a scream from Angela, and looking up, beheld four soldiers carrying a litter covered with a cloth, and advancing toward her. She knew it was the body of her husband, and unprepared for so terrible an encounter, uttered a cry of horror. The bearers of the litter passed on, and entered the porch of the chapel.

While this took place, Mauger, who had limped back as fast as he could after his bloody work on Tower Hill —only tarrying a moment to exchange his axe—ascended the steps of the scaffold, and ordered Wolfytt to get down. Sir Thomas Brydges, who was greatly shocked at what had just occurred, and would have prevented it if it had been possible, returned to Jane and offered her his assistance. But she did not require it. The force of the shock had passed away, and she firmly mounted the scaffold.

When she was seen there a groan of compassion arose from the spectators, and prayers were audibly uttered. She then advanced to the rail, and in a clear distinct voice, spoke as follows:—

"I pray you all to bear me witness that I die a true Christian woman, and that I look to be saved by no other means except the mercy of God, and the merits of the blood of His only Son Jesus Christ. I confess when I knew the Word of God I neglected it, and loved myself and the world, and therefore this punishment is a just return for my sins. But I thank God of His goodness that He has given me a time and respite to repent. And now, good people, while I am alive, I pray you assist me with your prayers."

Many fervent responses followed, and several of the bystanders imitated Jane's example, as, on the conclusion of her speech, she fell on her knees and recited the *Miserere.*

At its close, Feckenham said in a loud voice, "I ask you, madam, for the last time, will you repent?"

"I pray you, sir, to desist," replied Jane meekly. "I am now at peace with all the world, and would die so."

She then arose, and giving the prayer-book to Angela, said, "When all is over, deliver this to the lieutenant. These," she added, taking off her gloves and collar, "I give to you."

"And to me," cried Mauger, advancing and prostrating himself before her according to custom, "you give grace."

"And also my head," replied Jane. "I forgive thee heartily, fellow. Thou art my best friend."

"What ails you, madam?" remarked the lieutenant, observing Jane suddenly start and tremble.

"Not much," she replied, "but I thought I saw my husband pale and bleeding."

"Where?" demanded the lieutenant, recalling Dudley's speech.

"There, near the block," replied Jane. "I see the figure still. But it must be mere fantasy."

Whatever his thoughts were, the lieutenant made no reply; and Jane turned to Angela, who now began with trembling hands to remove her attire, and was trying to take off her velvet robe, when Mauger offered to assist her, but was instantly repulsed.

He then withdrew, and stationing himself by the block, assumed his hideous black mask, and shouldered his axe.

Partially disrobed, Jane bowed her head, while Angela tied a kerchief over her eyes, and turned her long tresses over her head to be out of the way. Unable to control herself, she then turned aside, and wept aloud. Jane moved forward in search of the block, but fearful of making a false step, felt for it with her hands, and cried, "What shall I do?—Where is it?—Where is it?"

Sir Thomas Brydges took her hand and guided her to it. At this awful moment there was a slight movement

in the crowd, some of whom pressed nearer the scaffold, and amongst others, Sorrocold and Wolfytt. The latter caught hold of the boards to obtain a better view. Angela placed her hands before her eyes, and would have suspended her being if she could ; and even Feckenham veiled his countenance with his robe. Sir Thomas Brydges gazed firmly on.

By this time Jane had placed her head on the block, and her last words were, " Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit ! "

The axe then fell, and one of the fairest and wisest heads that ever sat on human shoulders fell likewise.

Thus ends the Chronicle of the Tower of London.

THE END.

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